

An Exploration of Translation Behaviours among  
Translators and Proofreading Editors in the Information  
Service in Mega Sports Events in China

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# List of Chapters

<b>Abstract.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>List of Figures.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>List of Tables.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>List of Abbreviations.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction.....</b>	<b>6</b>
1.1 Research context.....	6
1.1.1 China's enthusiastic in hosting Mega Sports Events.....	6
1.1.2 A brief introduction to the information service in China.....	7
1.1.3 An additional translation rather than bilingual journalism.....	8
1.1.4 The nature of the information service in China - Translation, journalism and sports.....	10
1.2 Research Problem.....	12
1.3 Thesis outline.....	13
<b>Chapter 2: Literature Review.....</b>	<b>14</b>
2.1 Introduction.....	14
2.2 Significance of hosting MSEs and hosting MSEs in China.....	14
2.2.1 Academic definitions of an MSE (Mega Sports Event).....	14
2.2.2 The significance of hosting MSEs.....	16
2.2.3 Hosting MSEs in China.....	20
<i>Elite Sport - the key to the success of Chinese sports industry.....</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Using sports to handle domestic issues and participate in international affairs.....</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>Two Major Olympics- Making a debut on the world stage and taking on the role of a great power.....</i>	<i>25</i>
2.3 Introduction of the IS (Information Service) and its presence in China.....	30
2.3.1 The development of the IS and its definition.....	30
<i>Derived from the Department of Media Operations.....</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>A product of the IOC's Strategy to cope with the media in the Internet Era.....</i>	<i>34</i>
2.3.2 China's adaptation of the IS - adding translation to enhance the communication of the MSEs.....	39
<i>The Working System of the IS.....</i>	<i>40</i>
<i>The IS in China.....</i>	<i>43</i>
2.4 The complexity of translation in the IS in MSEs in China: an overlap of interdisciplinary practice.....	48
2.4.1 A brief introduction to translation - more than a transfer of meaning and culture..	48
2.4.2 Domestication and foreignization - a pair of generalized theories.....	50
<i>The development and approaches of domestication and foreignization - two magnetic fields.....</i>	<i>51</i>
<i>Evaluation of domestication and foreignization - a never-ending debate.....</i>	<i>54</i>
<i>Domestication and foreignization in China - Chinese matters the most.....</i>	<i>56</i>
2.4.3 News translation - filtering and adaptation.....	57
<i>Gatekeeping – a journalistic notion applied to news translation.....</i>	<i>59</i>
<i>Transediting - An approach favoured by Chinese media.....</i>	<i>63</i>
2.4.4. Translation of Sports News - A conjunction of news, translation and sports.....	67

<i>Sports Translation - A highly professional business under the veil of entertainment</i>	68
<i>Translation of Sports News - A notable contrast in application between China and the West</i>	70
2.5 Chapter Conclusion	72
2.6 Research aims, objectives and questions	74
<b>Chapter 3: Methodology</b>	<b>76</b>
3.1 Introduction	76
3.2 Research Philosophy	76
3.3 Research Approach	77
3.4 Research Method	80
3.5 Sampling	83
3.6 Conducting the Research	85
3.7 Thematic Analysis	87
3.8 Ethics	91
3.9 Validity	93
3.10 The dual role of the researcher in translation studies	94
3.11 Limitations	95
3.12 Chapter Summary	96
<b>Chapter 4: Discussion</b>	<b>98</b>
4.1 Introduction	98
4.2 Theme 1: Accuracy - A generalized term to avoid errors	98
4.2.1 Proofreading editors' auditing of basic information	98
4.2.2 Translators' strategies in word choice	101
4.2.3 Faithfulness to the completeness of quotations	105
4.2.4 Multiple checks on sports-related data	109
4.2.5 Summary of theme 1	112
4.3 Theme 2: the Source Text - a standard template for reference and revision by translators and proofreading editors	113
4.3.1 Information with newsworthy meanings	113
4.3.2 The primary consideration in the translation process	115
4.3.3 Challenges in translation in the IS	118
4.3.4 Proofreading editors' editing principles	122
4.3.5 Text logic	124
4.3.6 Summary of theme 2	129
4.4 Theme 3: Sensitive Information - more than just sensitive in China	129
4.4.1 Translators' proactive efforts to improve work efficiency	130
4.4.2 Proofreading editors' revisions to ensure the political neutrality of IS content	135
4.4.3 China as a special case for gatekeeping	139
4.4.4 The Organizing Committee (OC)'s role as an influence on the IS's work	142
4.4.5 Summary of theme 3	146
4.5 Theme 4: Readers - A compass that orients the work of translators and proofreading editors in the IS	147
4.5.1 Domestication	148
4.5.2 Proofreading editors' consideration of the media's needs	152

4.5.3 The challenge of translating sports terms.....	156
4.5.4 Difficulties posed by cultural differences during translation and proofreading....	161
4.5.5 Summary of theme 4.....	165
4.6 Chapter Summary.....	166
<b>Chapter 5: Conclusion.....</b>	<b>169</b>
5.1 Translation strategies applied in the IS in MSEs in China.....	171
5.1.1 A more complex picture than existing strategies suggest.....	171
5.1.2 More than a flexible utilization of domestication and foreignization.....	172
5.1.3 A not very sports-related translation.....	173
5.1.4 Supplementary explanation is never wrong.....	173
5.1.5 The requirement to serve diverse readers.....	174
5.1.6 A complex translation strategy- <i>Versalation</i> .....	175
5.2 Proofreading editors' leading role in the IS in MSEs in China.....	176
5.2.1 Two information processing experts with the same goal but different roles.....	177
5.2.2 Proofreading editors facing numerous relevant interest groups.....	178
5.2.3 Proofreading editors' individual preferences.....	179
5.3 Implications for Practice.....	180
5.4 Recommendations for Future Research.....	182
5.5 Reflections on the Research Journey.....	184
<b>Reference list.....</b>	<b>186</b>
<b>Appendices.....</b>	<b>213</b>
Appendix A: Consent form for interviews.....	213
Appendix B: List of codes and the graphic representation of codes, subthemes, and themes.....	217

## Abstract

Mega sports events are strategically employed by cities to gain capital and to rebrand their offer for tourists in the competitive global arena (Hall, 2006, p.59). For significant international sports events like the Olympic Games or any international championships, the Information Service, often managed by the International Olympic Committee (IOC), plays a crucial role in providing worldwide media outlets with comprehensive information both inside and outside the competition (Jiang, 2012, p.23). In China, translation becomes an integral component of the Information Service. Bilingual services in Chinese and English are provided, with translators playing an often-overlooked yet indispensable role (Lv & Guo, 2022, p.26). In exploring the information service office in China, this study draws on the Domestication & Foreignization theory in translation studies (Venuti, 1995), considers the impact of gatekeeping theory on news translation in journalism (White, 1950), and incorporates relevant theories of sports translation and news translation. The objective is to analyze the translation behaviours of, and strategies employed by, translators and proofreading editors in the information service.

The main findings are: The translation strategies employed by translators and proofreading editors in the information service office lack fixed parameters and exhibit flexibility, contingent upon considerations such as the source text, accuracy, sensitivity of information, and the intended audience. There is no universal translation strategy applied in the translation team. Therefore, the term ‘versalation’, which indicates a flexible and compatible translation strategy that allows translators and proofreading editors to adjust their translation in accordance to various considerations is proposed. Expressiveness and faithfulness, which extend from a fluent presentation of the translation to the precision of factual data and wording, are decisive factors that shape their final work. Both translators and proofreading editors openly acknowledge their gatekeeping role throughout the translation process, demonstrating benevolence

towards Chinese athletes, and the continuation and compliance with China's sports reporting policies. Proofreading editors shoulder a more substantial responsibility in this regard. Their translation strategies, particularly concerning sensitive information, are rooted in their individual preferences and influenced by diverse factors within and outside the information service office. These measures are consistent with China's long-term sports diplomacy objectives and are designed to avoid errors, thereby reflecting a proactive stance aimed at self-protection.

*Keywords:* Mega Sports Events; translation; news translation; sports translation; gatekeeping; domestication; foreignization



## List of Figures

Figure 2.1	The location of the IS in the OC in an MSE	p.33
Figure 2.2	The family tree of the Information Service	p.40
Figure 2.3	The interface of INFO in Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics	p.42
Figure 2.4	The publication process of the bilingual IS in MSEs in China	p.45
Figure 2.5	The generalized tree map of Domestication & Foreignization	p.50
Figure 4.1	An example of flash quotes discussed in the research	p.141
Figure 4.2	An example discussed among interviewees in this study	p.144

## List of Tables

Table 2.1	A list of International Sports Events held in China since 2008 and the involvement of the IS	p.43
Table 3.1	Brief information of the participants	p.84
Table 3.2	Interview questions for translators	p.86
Table 3.3	Interview questions for proofreading editors	p.86
Table 3.4	Complementary questions generated during the interviews	p.87
Table 3.5	Thematic framework of the data analysis	p.90

## List of Abbreviations

IS	Information Service
MSE	Mega Sports Event
IOC	International Olympic Committee
NS	News Service
OIS	Olympic Information Service
ONS	Olympic News Service
ST	Source Text
TT	Target Text
OC	Organizing Committee
INFO	Information Service System
OBS	Olympic Broadcasting Services
IBC	International Broadcasting Center
MPC	Main Press Center
VMC	Venue Media Center

# **Chapter 1: Introduction**

## **1.1 Research context**

### **1.1.1 China's enthusiastic in hosting Mega Sports Events**

Hosting Mega Sports Events (MSEs) has been recognized as an opportunity for the host city or host country to demonstrate their economic strength and political power (Zhang & Caple, 2021, p.71), as well as a method to promote national cultures on the international stage (Chen & MacDonald, 2020, p.42). Since the 20th century, especially for developing countries like China or Brazil, the successful hosting of an MSE has been an affirmation of the host city's or the host country's international status - a declaration of being one of the undebatable regional or international powers in terms of economic and political strength (Brannagan & Giulianotti, 2014, p.703).

China, emerging as a formidable force both economically and politically since the mid-20th century, has become a focal point on the global stage. The nation has played host to a myriad of Mega Sporting Events (MSEs), highlighted by the grand spectacles of the Beijing 2008 Summer Olympics and the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics. China has also hosted three Asian Games over the span of four decades: Beijing in 1990, Guangzhou in 2010, and Hangzhou in 2023. Additionally, China has welcomed international events such as the Nanjing 2014 Youth Olympics and the Wuhan 2019 Military World Games.

The transformative impact of these events is exemplified by the 2008 Summer Olympics, where China invests a staggering \$40 billion in infrastructure. This substantial investment reshapes the cityscape of Beijing, drawing approximately 600,000 foreign visitors and 2.5 million domestic Chinese tourists during the Olympic games. The financial returns are substantial, generating a revenue of \$146 million, primarily sources from the sale of broadcasting rights and sponsorship (Reuters, 2009).

Fast forward 14 years to the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics, and China's unwavering enthusiasm for hosting MSEs remains evident. The nation, having allocated an organizational budget of \$2.29 billion, yields a surplus of \$52 million. This not only underscores the

financial acumen of China's approach but also signifies an achievement in fostering international engagement with winter sports. The event successfully involves a staggering 346 million Chinese individuals in winter sports, showcasing China's commitment to broadening the appeal of such activities on a global scale (IOC, 2023). Hosting MSEs, particularly iconic events like the Olympics, stands as a significant mission entrusted to China, spanning from the central government to local authorities.

### **1.1.2 A brief introduction to the information service in China**

The information service (IS), previously known as the news service, was officially launched by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in the Sydney 2000 Summer Olympics. In cooperation with the organizing committee (OC), the information service (IS) aims to assist media outlets scheduling their daily plans and offer writing materials for journalists who are not able to interview medalists or significant persons who are relevant to the MSEs to write reports due to the intensive arrangement of competition schedules (Jiang, 2014, p.14; Guo, 2016, p.123). Generally, the media outlets are able to select and use the information provided by the IS based on their needs before and during the MSE. Therefore, to guarantee the smooth-running of the IS before and during the MSE, a team of up to 200 people made up of journalists, editors, coordinators is organized (Zhao, 2019, p.33).

For a country whose native language is not English, China took the lead in offering bilingual IS in the Beijing 2008 Summer Olympics, and has continued to use this model in nearly all international sports events in China since then, covering competitions on all scales and sports such as The 45th World Artistic Gymnastics Championships in Nanning 2014, the 14th FINA World Swimming Championships (25m) in Hangzhou 2018, Military World Games in Wuhan 2019, and the recent Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics.

In line with the setting of the IS in previous MSEs, since the Beijing 2008 Summer Olympics, the IS office in China has additionally hired a translation team made up of translators and proofreading editors to meet the demands of both international and domestic media. Therefore, the IS in China is reliant on translation, with intersections of sports and journalism, co-launched with the organizing committee (OC) to offer facilities, national news

agency (usually Xinhua News Agency) to lead and build up the team, and the official global organization of sports (such as the International Olympic Committee, or the Fédération Internationale de Gymnastique, or Fédération Internationale De Natation) to provide data.

According to the instructions of the IOC, the official working language of the IS is English, and the content provided by the IS should be accurate, articulate and informative, without distorting the interviewees' original expressions (Chen, 2018, p.72). Journalists of the IS office are often required to keep records of the interviews in case there are unnecessary misunderstandings, or certain information needs to be checked. The IS in the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics even provides audio recordings of each interview in the system. The IS team in China usually consists of four groups, comprising: journalists, English editors, translators and proofreading editors. This highly productive team translates hundreds of articles daily, typically assigning at least 15 articles per proofreading editor. In the 14th FINA World Swimming Championships (25m) in Hangzhou 2018, there were 4 English journalists, 6 Chinese journalists, 6 translators, 3 English editors, 4 proofreading editors in total, plus a chief director and a coordinator. Together, they published 279 Chinese articles and 298 English articles, in a 6-day event. In the 2019 Military World Games in Wuhan, the IS team published 1821 Chinese articles and 2169 English articles in total, with a team nearly ten times larger than that in Hangzhou.

### **1.1.3 An additional translation rather than bilingual journalism**

The IS has drawn considerable attention from scholars in journalism and communication in China, such as Chen (2019), Jiang (2012, 2014, 2018), Zhao (2019). However, these studies tend to focus on the economic impacts of MSEs, or on their role as tools for the host city or host country to enhance their international economic and political status through the lenses of sports communication and public relations, or on the topic of sports news in MSEs.

A few pieces of research address the topic within the context of translation disciplines and the bilingual article genres of the IS. They typically focus on text analysis, involving comparisons of close readings of bilingual texts or introductions to the characteristics of each genre, often substantiated with examples, such as Jiang (2014), Guo (2016), Chen et al (2013).

What is missing from these analyses is an understanding of the practical translation approaches applied by translators and proofreading editors, within the dynamic context of their fast-paced work environment, which involves a blend of sports and news information.

With journalism and translation involved, the IS in MSEs held in China is often misunderstood as a type of bilingual journalism among Chinese journalism scholars such as Jiang (2014, 2018), Zhao (2019) etc. However, it could be argued that the IS business in MSEs in China is not bilingual journalism.

Bilingual journalism is seen as a news product of mixing languages, aiming to receive more audiences from the market of the minority language (Lewis, 2008, p.409), such as the Latin communities in the USA. By comparing several bilingual journalism programs from the University of Nevada, the University of Arizona and San Francisco State University, it is not hard to notice that these programs all put ‘being bilingual’ prior to journalism skills in their program introductions. This is to say, bilingual journalism is based on bilingualism, which means an individual’s ability to mix linguistic skills and cultural codes between two languages (Köktürk, et al, 2016, p.74), not merely the ability to speak or write in two languages. Bilingual journalists are then defined as bilingual individuals who possess journalism skills rather than journalists who can use two languages.

The notion of journalism is shared among journalists as a way of reconstructing information, applying various methods to similar contents to make meanings (Deuz, 2005, p.445), and journalists should be neutral, objective and fair, with the freedom of editorial autonomy and delivering opinions (Deuz, 2005, p.448).

In the IS work, in or outside China, journalists and editors only provide information to the media without over-editing it. Paraphrasing or adding specific explanation for ambiguous and obscure texts is allowed to make more sense of the texts as a method of enhancing readability and accuracy, yet no opinions or misleading information are permitted. In addition, the diversity in target readers also determines the difference, as the media’s audiences are the public and their subscribers, the audiences of the IS are the media, as defined by Jiang (2014, p.15): ‘The IS is seen as a temporary official agency established by the OC, whose job is to deliver information to the registered media’.

The IOC changed its name from ‘the news service’ since the Rio 2016 Olympics for this

reason. In fact, the appellation, the INFORMATION service, truly represents its nature, that is providing information rather than news. It is easier to comprehend this concept by associating this with the phenomenon that every news agency has an office entitled ‘information centre’.

Therefore, as mentioned above, the bilingual IS only appears in China (the reasons for this given by the Chinese government are given in chapter 2.2). Neither the journalists nor the editors are required to speak two languages to obtain their positions (although journalists who could speak other minority languages are appreciated because interviews with athletes who don’t speak English also need to be written in English afterwards). Only the translators and proofreading editors who are responsible for checking the translation scripts are required to have excellent bilingual skills and translation experience. Therefore, what happens in the IS in MSEs in China is merely a regular IS, with an additional translation process involved. It is within this context that this study unfolds, viewing the translation as a distinct and unique process.

#### **1.1.4 The nature of the information service in China - Translation, journalism and sports**

Having discussed the nature of the IS in MSEs in China, it is necessary to pay attention to the approaches that could be applied to analyzing its work. To begin with, Venuti’s domestication and foreignization theory paves the way for discussion, which mainly focuses on the topic of whether a translation should incline to the source text (ST) or the target text (TT) (Venuti, 1995). This is addressed in detail in section 2.4.2. The content provided by the IS is also very unusual, as sports terms and jargon often occupy the interviews. By discussing this, section 2.4.4 aims to introduce relevant theories in translation that are related to sports.

In preparation for the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics, the IS office furnishes a pre-game report detailing the translation of winter sports terms from English to Chinese. The challenge arises not only from the inherent complexity of the terms themselves but also from the necessity to elucidate them by drawing parallels with more familiar sports, comprehensible to seasoned sports journalists. The intricacy of this task is evident in the meticulous approach taken by translators and editors. Striking the appropriate balance between explanation and



fidelity to the ST remains an ongoing challenge, as the IS endeavors to cater to diverse audiences without compromising on the authenticity of the content. This research doesn't focus on the language service in the MSEs, which is located within ESP (English for Specific Purpose) research. Instead, it uses some of the definitions of ESP to explain and analyze the translation in the IS, such as methods, and contents (Lv & Guo, 2016, p.27).

Simultaneously, the IS is infused with journalistic skills, adding a layer of nuance to its role. Despite primarily providing information rather than news, the content published by the IS office holds intrinsic value and newsworthiness. This research endeavors to uncover the nuances within the translation processes of the IS, connecting them with theories in news translation. One prominent theory that resonates in the translation of IS content is 'transediting', a term introduced by Karen Stetting in 1989, indicating that 'a certain amount of editing has always been included in the translation task' (Stetting, 1989, p.371). Transediting is intricately linked to the concept of gatekeeping, a notion that certain individuals or groups wield the power to determine the inclusion or exclusion of news content (White, 1950, p.383).

In the realm of the IS, proofreading editors serve as the final gatekeepers in the translation process, deciding whether an article or a specific section thereof should be published. Notably, variations in content between English and Chinese versions are permissible, as long as the information remains authentic.

This research reports the experiences of 16 participants, comprising 10 translators and 6 proofreading editors, each possessing diverse levels of experience. The data collection process involves online interviews conducted in Chinese, and transcribes in Chinese for analysis. The interview questions are designed to discover the participants' guiding principles and operational approaches pertaining to the translation and publication of content related to the information service in mega sports events in China. These inquiries are located within the framework of translation theories, sports news theories and sports translation theories. To maintain objectivity and mitigate potential bias, each transcription underwent a thorough review by the respective interviewees prior to the commencement of the analysis. Thematic analysis is employed to derive overarching themes and sub-themes from the gathered data.

## 1.2 Research Problem

Previous studies have suggested that an MSE is a communication activity that aims to help the host country promote its culture, to enhance its international reputation and build national image (Guo, 2016, p.123), to arouse passion, pride and patriotism (Chen & MacDonald, 2020, p.44) and to restate regional and territory governance (Ladhari & Souiden, 2020, p.460). The IS in the MSEs in China is launched in the anticipation of assisting the OC to reach these goals (Jiang, 2014, p.15).

However, it is important to note that existing research primarily revolves around theoretical discussions and textual analyses, offering generalized summaries of practical instructions within the operational framework of the IS. Existing research reveals that what the IS offers in MSEs in China are bilingual texts that could be used by either domestic or international media, which involves the work of journalism and translation. Jiang (2014, p.14) and Zhang et al (2019, p.77) state that the IS in the MSEs in China function as temporary news agencies for the organizing committee, filtering published content and shaping media agendas. This underscores the importance of investigating the IS from the lens of news translation, incorporating concepts like gatekeeping and transediting. However, it is important to note that existing research primarily revolves around theoretical discussions and textual analyses, offering generalized summaries of practical instructions within the operational framework of the IS. To investigate the translation in the IS in MSEs in China, the author himself (Guo, 2016) conducted a study that used text analysis to discover translation principles based on the genres of the articles, with brief introductions of rules that could be applied to the translation process from English to Chinese. In 2022, Lv and Guo discussed translator behaviour in the IS in MSEs in China, using text analysis based on the data corpus from the pre-game information report of the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics. They further uncovered the translation challenges and intentions from the perspective of the translators.

Therefore, a conspicuous gap in the research landscape emerges due to the absence of practical and empirical studies specifically focusing on the translation processes within the IS. This underscores the need for a more in-depth exploration, prompting the present research: a study involving specialists. This research aims to delve deeper into the realm of IS translation,

bringing together specialists to engage in comprehensive discussions. The study seeks to unravel the intricacies of translation strategies employed within the IS and to elucidate the underlying reasons guiding these strategies. The intention is to bridge the existing gap in knowledge by grounding the research in real-world practices, providing insights into the decision-making processes and practical considerations involved in translating content for the IS.

### **1.3 Thesis outline**

In chapter one, a brief introduction of the research has been presented to illustrate the complexity of the translation in the IS in MSEs in China, which overlaps with sports, journalism and MSE studies, also indicating the research gap. The research questions, aims and objectives have been identified along with the research background.

In chapter two, the literature review of relevant studies will provide key theories and a framework for this research. The literature review is divided into three parts: Significance of hosting MSEs and hosting MSEs in China; Introduction of the IS (Information Service) and its presence in China; The complexity of the translation in the IS in MSEs in China, an overlap of interdisciplinary practice.

In chapter three, the methodology of this research will be presented. A discussion of the research design and methods will be presented, following the arguments of why this research will be an exploratory research with a deductive approach, and why the thematic analysis will be used for analyzing data. In addition, the reason for adopting a qualitative method for the questionnaires will also be stated.

In chapter four, the data and results of the research will be provided and discussed. The themes, sub-themes and categories generated by using thematic analysis and the results of the questionnaires will be listed.

In chapter five, this research will have a full explanatory discussion of the research results, along with the implications. Conclusions will be drawn according to the discussion to answer the research questions respectively.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This research focuses primarily on translation in the IS (Information Service) in MSEs (Mega Sports Events) in China. It aims to shed light on the specific translation practices employed by the IS's translation team, including translators and proofreading editors. To provide readers with a comprehensive understanding of the research scope, this chapter will cover three main areas: Significance of hosting MSEs and hosting MSEs in China; Introduction of the IS and its presence in China; The complexity of translation in the IS in MSEs in China, pointing to the fact that the IS in MSEs in China intersect with the practices of journalism, sports, and translation. In light of the limited existing research on the IS, particularly within the Chinese context, this chapter serves as a consolidation of available academic insights and findings pertaining to the IS and its operational dynamics in China. Integrating fundamental principles derived from studies in translation, journalism, sports journalism, and translation in sports, the overall objective of this chapter is to establish a theoretical framework for the analysis of this study, facilitating readers' comprehension of the research content and findings.

### **2.2 Significance of hosting MSEs and hosting MSEs in China**

#### **2.2.1 Academic definitions of an MSE (Mega Sports Event)**

The term 'Mega Sports Events' (MSEs) typically brings to mind renowned competitions like the Olympics and the World Cup, which attract significant global attention and involve thousands of participants. However, defining MSEs proves to be a more intricate task, as discussions often revolve around their typical characteristics, rather than providing precise definitions (Müller, 2015, p.627).

To begin with, the term 'Mega Events' is commonly used to identify events like the Olympics or the World Cup, which are cultural phenomena on a large scale, with worldwide

relevance, extensive participation, and broad public appeal (Roche, 2000, p.1). This classic definition serves as a foundation for scholars studying MSEs, who then expand upon it in their own definitions.

MSEs are sports events of international significance that captivate a global audience and allow the host country's government to participate in their development (Grix & Houlihan, 2014, p.573). The term 'mega' associated with these events conveys several essential characteristics, including a large number of visitors to the host location (Müller, 2015, p.628; Maennig & Zimbalist, 2012, p.9; Mills & Rosentraub, 2013, p.239; Jago & Shaw, 1998, p.29), extensive media coverage in various forms (Müller, 2015, p.630; Maennig & Zimbalist, 2012, p.9; Mills & Rosentraub, 2013, p.239; Jago & Shaw, 1998, p.29), substantial investments (Müller, 2015, p.632), and a significant impact on the population and environment due to infrastructure upgrades and urban renewal (Müller, 2015, p.633; Mills & Rosentraub, 2013, p.239; Gold & Gold, 2011, p.1). However, Müller (2015, p.639) argues that events like the World Rugby Cup or the Super Bowl might be debatable as 'mega' because their cost or investment is usually lower than other sports competitions in international levels.

Meanwhile, other scholars propose additional features of MSEs. Ritchie and Ju (1987, p.20) and describe MSEs as one-time or recurrent events of short duration that enhance a destination's visibility. On the other hand, Gammon (2011, p.106) believes an MSE always involves various sports rather than a single sport, each of which might attract different levels of attention and media coverage (contrary to the World Cup's all-encompassing popularity).

However, one aspect that is not commonly mentioned in definitions, but bears consideration is Roche's (2000) contention that a defining characteristic of the Olympics is the 'event legacies' they leave in terms of urban redevelopment and heritage (p.153), such as accommodation buildings, transportation facilities, and landmark venues (p.152). Legacy refers to the planned and unplanned, favourable and unfavourable, tangible and intangible structures that are produced before or after a sports event (Gratton & Preuss, 2008, p.1924). In 2021, the IOC proposed 'legacy' as a requirement for the Olympic movement, claiming that one of their purposes should be 'to promote a positive legacy from the Olympic Games to the host cities, regions, host countries' (IOC, 2021, p.14). Hence, owing to the directives of the IOC and the legacies that can be perceived as inheritances from past sports events, cities

possessing established Olympic legacies are predisposed to attain bid victories. Additionally, cities with prior experience in hosting sports events are often favoured by international sports associations as well (Yang et al. 2022, p.213). 20 years later, what was seen as one of the outcomes of an MSE by Roche could be considered an indispensable part of the term nowadays. It could be argued that a continuation of a previous event's legacy or the establishment of a new one is another feature that sets an MSE apart from sports events in other tiers.

Hayes and Karamichas (2012, p.2) highlight the comprehensiveness of an MSE, emphasizing its political, economic, and sporting aspects, which generate and project symbolic meanings, particularly regarding statehood, economic dominance, and collective cultural identity. The research presented in this thesis is grounded in the foundational framework established by earlier studies, which view MSEs as both sporting competitions of global significance and attention-drawing activities. Consequently, the following section will focus on the sports characteristics and communication significance of the MSE.

### **2.2.2 The significance of hosting MSEs**

Various theoretical frameworks and academic disciplines have been employed to assess MSEs, including economics, geography, political science, urban planning, and sociology. The significance of hosting an MSE can be summarized in four key aspects: fostering economic growth, catalyzing urban regeneration, inspiring social changes, and building destination brands (Theodoraki, 2016, p.185). This chapter will provide a concise overview of the essential theories related to these aspects and then focus on the communication and cultural significance of hosting MSEs, which forms the framework for this study.

Economically, hosting an MSE is often a successful addition to the host cities' and regions' economic development strategies (Burgan & Mules, 2001, p.323), maintaining or strengthening their global economic position (Ladhari & Souiden, 2020, p.460). Even countries or cities that fail to secure the bid for hosting an MSE can still gain benefits from increased tourism, albeit not as substantial as those who win the bid (Fourie & Santana-Gallego, 2011, p.1369). In the short term, the MSE preparations create numerous job

opportunities, attract celebrities, especially in the eSports industry (Popescu et al., 2020, p.15), and stimulate direct foreign investments (Preus & Alfs, 2011, p.56). Sports enthusiasts travelling to witness the competitions during the MSE often offset the government's initial investment and boost regional tax revenue from travel and accommodation (Bjelac & Radovanovic, 2003, p.266). Furthermore, the host country's stock market is expected to benefit from hosting an MSE in the long run (Zawadzki, 2013, p.8). The first Olympics recognized to generate a sizable profit was the Los Angeles Summer Olympics in 1984 (Barclay, 2009, p.66), with a pure profit of 232.5 million US dollars (1984 value), and is considered to be a milestone of the Olympic Games in the modern era (Lange, 2018).

In recent decades, regeneration programs have increasingly utilized sports as a means to revitalize and support declining cities and regions, fostering unique identities and mitigating the negative effects of urban decline (Wainwright & Ansell, 2008, p.2). MSEs like the Olympics have acted as catalysts for the physical and symbolic reconstruction of cities. These events lead to the construction of new sports facilities, lodgings, and improvements in transportation and urban appearance (Malfas et al., 2004, p.215). An exemplary case is the extensive waterfront development in Barcelona for the 1992 Olympics (Malfas et al., 2004, p.210). The city's transformation was widely acclaimed, with Degen (2004, p.131) hailing Barcelona as 'the most successful global paradigm for post-industrial urban rehabilitation based on its urban architecture', prompting a substantial public investment of 6.2 billion US dollars (1995 prices) to redevelop Barcelona into a prominent tourist destination in Europe (Garcia-Ramon & Albet, 2000, p.1332). The revitalized area, Poblenou, a once-industrial suburb, has since been transformed into a fashionable and modern hub, thanks to the impact of the Olympics.

MSEs have a particularly influential role in promoting physical exercise and communal health, especially among young people. Research indicates that a notable portion of television viewers watching sports events are inspired to engage in sports or enhance their regular participation. The exemplary performances of top athletes during these events exert a significant inspirational influence, not only prompting viewers to partake in sports but also serving as a potential avenue for discovering new sporting talents (UK Sport, 2011, p.4). Hosting MSEs also fosters a sense of unity among residents with differing viewpoints,

enhancing their satisfaction with the government and contributing to national peace, political cohesion, and public support (Chen & MacDonald, 2020, p.43). Moreover, MSEs symbolically reinforce regional and territorial administration, akin to military parades or national anthems, while also igniting civil pride (Ladhari & Souiden, 2020, p.460; Chen & MacDonald, 2020, p.42). South Africa is the case by making history as the inaugural African host of the FIFA World Cup, marking a significant milestone for the continent. Former RSA president Thabo Mbeki emphasized the event's goal: instilling confidence across Africa, from Cape Town to Cairo. He envisioned the World Cup as a pivotal moment in shaping images of Africa, transcending centuries of famine, conflict, and neglect in the continent's history (Kobierecki, 2013, p.64).

As indicated above, the goal of hosting MSEs has evolved from solely economic expectations to encompass the enhancement of intangible strengths, such as city branding, showcasing top-tier entertainment, establishing international status, producing unique cultural outputs (Manzenreiter, 2010, p.32), promoting national identity growth, image transformation, and 'soft power' (Knott et al., 2017, p.904), ultimately leading to a positive impact of tourist destinations and economic revenue (Sant et al., 2020, p.3). Additionally, hosting an MSE presents the host nation with opportunities to form alliances with international organizations, further aiding in the promotion of the host nation (Kobierecki, 2013, p.63). The 2014 World Cup in Brazil facilitated alliances between the football industry in Brazil and international football associations, aiming to advance commercialism and create an opportunity for Brazil to assert its footballing heritage and passion, emphasizing its cultural identity to a worldwide audience (Horne & Silvestre, 2016, p.486). The 2018 World Cup in Russia intended to boost its soft power through football and provide a positive image to both Russian and global audiences, distinct from the stereotyped image the West was used to, and one part of Putin's plan to bring Russia back to glory and prosperity (Castro, 2018, p.18). In each of these cases, the World Cup served as a powerful catalyst for showcasing the host countries' capabilities, promoting their national identities, enhancing soft power and leaving a lasting impact on both domestic and international audiences.

While Theodoraki's summary highlights the general significance of hosting MSEs, Roche's perspective from communication studies and international politics offers further



insights into how these events become arenas for countries to communicate and shape their national image, influence international perceptions, and engage in diplomatic endeavours with global implications. The combination of these perspectives enriches our understanding of the multifaceted impacts of hosting MSEs. Roche (2000) believes that hosting a Major Sporting Event (MSE) strategically enables the host country to rapidly enhance its international status and influence, operating through a three-fold process: publicly asserting its international political stance, actively engaging in global political affairs, and repositioning itself prominently on the global stage.

These theoretical benefits of hosting an MSE have garnered recognition from developing countries, particularly those in East Asia and other emerging regions, eager to showcase their economic prowess on the global stage (Brannagan & Giulianotti, 2015, p.706). Moreover, it provides these countries with a chance to catch up with Western notions of modernity while projecting unique hyper-modern characteristics (Horne, 2017, p.333). An illustrative case was the 2002 FIFA World Cup in South Korea, where the government capitalized on the event's exposure to enhance international recognition of its products and elevated its global stature, rejuvenating its economy after the Asian Economic Crisis of the late 1990s (Gratton & Preuss, 2008, p.1929; Dowse & Fletcher, 2018, p.754). The 2016 Summer Olympics in Brazil was a broader government initiative that aimed at elevating the global visibility of Brazil, especially Rio (Sajna, 2018, p.47), positioning it as a 'sporting superpower' and reinforcing its political and economic influence in South America (Zardini, 2020, p.44). Similarly, the 2022 World Cup marked the first time the Middle East was selected to host such a grand-scale event. Qatar's aim was to establish itself as a significant player in the international arena and dispel the perception of being merely an underdeveloped, exotic, wealthy, but inferior nation, with a social structure at odds with Western ideals, especially concerning women's equality (Griffin, 2019, p.1001). The 2024 Olympic Games will accelerate the redevelopment of the capital city of France (Wolfe, 2022, p.3), showing Paris as an open and modern city following the IOC's requests of involving more sports that are favoured by young generations and genders (Imbo, 2021). These examples highlight how hosting MSEs enables the host countries to assert their strength, modernity, and uniqueness on the global stage, while also addressing and reshaping certain stereotypes and perceptions about them. One can argue that hosting MSEs provides

the hosting countries, especially developed countries with an opportunity to flaunt their economic might and demonstrate their commitment to embracing cultural diversity, thus positioning themselves as influential players on the global stage.

The significance of hosting MSEs offers a valuable framework for this study. It elucidates why countries pursue the opportunity to host MSEs and outlines the potential benefits that the host city or country can accrue. However, the motivations behind each host nation or city vary. Therefore, the following section will delve into scholarly discourse on how China has garnered favour within the global sports industry and has evolved into an essential participant in hosting MSEs. The section will discuss the motivations of China's enthusiasm for hosting MSEs and its growing role in this domain.

### **2.2.3 Hosting MSEs in China**

China is a strong force that cannot be ignored in either competitive sports or the hosting of sports events. The Beijing 2008 Olympics represents the most significant sports event ever held in China. This section will review scholars' opinions on China's strategies in sports, how these strategies contributed to the successful bid for the Olympics and what China tries to achieve by hosting all levels of sports events, especially the two Olympics.

#### ***Elite Sport - the key to the success of Chinese sports industry***

The People's Republic of China was founded in 1949. Before 1949, the Chinese sports industry could therefore not be systematically developed due to war and political unrest. The organizational framework for Chinese sports initially diverged from the cultural paradigms prevalent in Western contexts (Boucher, 2008, p.48). Aligned with its socialist ethos, China adopts sports policies from the approaches observed in the Soviet Union and East Germany. Within these paradigms, sports assumes multifaceted roles encompassing the cultivation of physical well-being, the promotion of national identity, and the reinforcement of socialist and communist ideologies, all culminating in the accrual of international prestige (Zheng et al., 2018, p.472).

In the 1950s, China embraced the concept of elite sports from the Soviet Union, integrating it into its planned economy and administrative framework to advance socialism via the sports industry. The government strategically allocated limited sports resources to disciplines with medal potential on the global stage (Zheng et al., 2018, p.480). Central to China's sports policy since this time was 'JuGuo TiZhi' (举国体制), emphasizing systematic support for elite sports. This mandated collaborative efforts across government tiers to cultivate and identify talent, transforming sports into a national endeavor (Hong, 2008, p.35). The goal was the profound advancement of elite sports, aiming for Olympic glory and fostering a sense of collective national achievement (Zheng et al., 2018, p.480).

From 1961 to 1966, China consolidated its elite athletic system, prioritizing ten sports through significant investments aiming for international success, emphasizing 'JuGuo TiZhi' (举国体制) and elite sport over mass participation (Zheng et al., 2018, p.479). The pivotal 'Olympic Strategy' was initiated in 1985, integral to China's comprehensive plan to host the Olympic Games (Wei et al., 2012, p.31). The evolution of China's sports administration, starting in the 1950s and reaching its zenith with 'JuGuo TiZhi' (举国体制) in the 1980s, underscored the nation's commitment to elite sports (Hong, 2008, p.27). This commitment persisted alongside expanding efforts to promote mass sports engagement (Wei et al., 2012, p.31; Lu & Hong, 2013, p.103).

### ***Using sports to handle domestic issues and participate in international affairs***

Since the 1950s, sports in China have been intricately linked with politics, serving as a tool to unify diverse political ideologies, enhance national pride (Ma & Kurscheidt, 2019, p.681), solidify nationalism (Chen & MacDonald, 2020, p.47), unearth sports talents, enrich citizens' leisure, and communicate communist ideals (Yang, 2019, p.7). This multifaceted role is evident in various sporting events across administrative levels, including the National Games of China, Provincial Games, City Games, and the National Traditional Ethnic Minorities Sports Games.

Athletes, as primary participants of sports events, play a crucial role. Achieving Olympic medals elevates them to celebrity status, which means in this context that they carry

responsibilities as public figures. In China, the government promotes national pride by publicly admiring accomplished athletes, intertwining sportsmanship with nationalism (Sullivan & Kehoe, 2019, p.255). Wang (2022, p.240) indicates that athletes in China encompass the embodiment of sportsmanship, closely intertwined with nationalism, thus positioning them as potential conduits for advancing sports strategies and as sources of inspiration for upholding excellence in athletic pursuits. While Wang failed to expand this theory, Chen and MacDonald (2020, p.42) further explain that China's strategic emphasis on athletes' achievements in sports broadcasts aims to enhance the degree of satisfaction, compliance and support from the citizens to the government. This reveals the capacity of sports triumphs to evoke pride and bolster viewers' allegiance to the prevailing societal order.

The Chinese government also raises the prominence of sports in its political discourse, intertwining sports competition with history and nationalism (Chen & MacDonald, 2020, p.42). This approach is exemplified through the utilization of various sports to promote and amplify anti-Japanese sentiments. The interconnectedness of nations and sports can lead to pronounced national pride (Chen & MacDonald, 2020, p.42). A poignant illustration of this phenomenon is found in women's volleyball, particularly embodied by Lang Ping, a globally renowned figure in the realm of volleyball players and coaches. Lang Ping has publicly emphasized on multiple occasions that 'The Japanese (women's volleyball team) is the only opponent we (the Chinese women's volleyball team) cannot lose to on the court' (Shi, 2022; Leap, 2020). This phenomenon is often viewed as a form of narrow nationalism, yet it also aligns with the imperative of competitive sports within China's 'JuGuo TiZhi' (举国体制) framework, where sports victories symbolize national strength and serve as a means to promote national spirit (Huang, 2007, p.30). The triumph over Japan in international competitions is perceived as resistance against historical oppression and a victory against fascism, for the reasons that Japan's egregious invasion of China in modern times, rooted in longstanding historical grievances (Lv, 2011, p.139), and Japan and China adopted divergent paths in sports development after World War II, with Japan following American pragmatism while China embraced Soviet-inspired physical education ideals, leading to contrasting approaches (Wang, 2002, p.22). This narrative directly associates sports with national resurgence and fervently advocates for the concept of national rejuvenation, often referred to

as ‘national sports’ (A sport endowed with strong national and patriotic colours) (Lv, 2011, p.139), which is tangential to the focus of this study and thus requires no further elaboration.

The Chinese governmental agenda remains predominantly centered on domestic imperatives before 2008, underscored by the imperative to equip the nation for the challenges posed by globalization and the imminent engagement with Western societies. China's sporting performance successes in 2008 is interpreted as indicating the superiority of socialism and its sports policy to Chinese citizens (Manzenreiter, 2010, p.42). Indeed, shortly after the founding of the People's Republic of China, China used sports as a ‘special language’ to participate in international affairs.

In the late 1970s, a notable evolution occurred in China's global engagement, particularly in its rapport with the United States, precipitated by the groundbreaking ‘Ping Pong Diplomacy’. This diplomatic initiative entailed the organization of table tennis matches between the two nations, a seminal venture that can be regarded as the pivotal ‘ice-breaker’, catalyzing the nascent relationship between China and the United States (Grix, 2015, p.156). President Nixon proposed a long-term trade contract after China hosted the US table tennis team in 1971; the sports competition between the US and China led to more formal political discussions and business negotiations (Millerwood, 2021). In this way, China has used sports to build channels across nations, or simply as a platform that could offer dialogues with foreign powers in a less political and formal environment, weakening the conflicts of socialism and capitalism.

The Taiwan Strait issue between the Chinese mainland and Taiwan has also seen notable developments through sports. China's reinstatement into the IOC in 1979 led to Taiwan's suspension from participating in the Olympics under its previous designation, ‘The Republic of China’ (Wei et al., 2012, p.31). Recognizing Beijing as the official representative of China, the IOC reinstated Taiwan under the name ‘Chinese Taipei’, a designation that persists until now (Slack et al., 2002, p.345). China's growing international influence in sports contributed to global recognition of the ‘One China’ policy on the Taiwan issue, fostering diplomatic advancements. In 1993, despite an unsuccessful bid for the 2000 Olympics, the relationship between Chinese Taipei and the People's Republic of China showed signs of improvement, as demonstrated by Wu Jingguo, the leader of the IOC in Chinese Taipei, voting for Beijing,

indicating a thaw in cross-strait relations (Wei et al., 2012, p.32).

In China, sports celebrities, mainly Olympic medalists, not only play a crucial role in securing bids for hosting events but also act as symbolic agents, contributing to global influence and dialogue as instruments of public diplomacy (Qi & Wang, 2022, p.160). While historically, China engaged in sending table tennis athletes and coaches to foster diplomatic ties, the dynamics have shifted. Eileen Gu, a pioneering freestyle skier with a complex national identity, stands out as a star who won three medals in a single Winter Olympics, sparking extensive discourse on social media. Gu's decision to represent China instead of the US in 2019, amidst economic and political tensions, carried significant political implications due to her international background and strategic navigation of dual Chinese and American identities (Wu, 2022; Duffy, 2022).

In August 2017, Chinese President Xi Jinping emphasized that 'sports carry our dream for strength, prosperity, and national rejuvenation' (Xinhuanet, 2017). President Xi consistently employs sports as a universal language to foster amicable relationships and goodwill globally. His attendance at the Wuhan 2019 Military World Games aimed to create friendly relations between members of the Armed Forces and to realize the 'Chinese Dream' of rejuvenating the nation (SCIO, 2019). The Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics aligned with China's commitment to carbon neutrality by 2060, and symbolized a cooperative alliance with the International Olympic Committee, showcasing China's peaceful rise on the global stage (Chu, 2021, p.1891; Patel, 2021). China's current sports diplomacy aligns with President Xi Jinping's broader diplomatic concepts, emphasizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, a shared future for humanity, multipolarity, friendship, and the Belt and Road initiative (a global infrastructure development strategy implemented by China to invest in over 150 countries and organizations from Asia to Europe) (Bērziņa-Čerenkova, 2022, p.15). Notably, the slogan for the Beijing 2022 Olympics, 'Together for a shared future', resonates with President Xi's signature foreign policy vision, 'Building a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind' (Bērziņa-Čerenkova, 2022, p.23).

## ***Two Major Olympics- Making a debut on the world stage and taking on the role of a great power***

The year 2022 marked the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics in China, thereby establishing Beijing as a pioneering global city to have successfully hosted both the Summer and Winter Olympics (Xin & Kunzmann, 2020, p.78). The remarkable achievement of orchestrating two Olympic events within a span of merely 14 years led to a great sense of achievement. However, it is imperative to acknowledge that the journey to secure these hosting opportunities was far from easy, characterized by inherent project complexities, rival contenders' advantages, and obstacles presented by Western governments (Chu, 2018, p.1306).

China's ambition to bid for the Olympics traces back to 1985 with the inception of the 'Olympic Strategy' (mentioned above), seeking to position China as a sporting superpower on par with the US, Japan, and South Korea (Hong & Lu, 2012, p.145), while also seeking to display socialism's superiority over capitalism (Hong et al., 2005, p.518). In 1990, Deng Xiaoping, the General Secretary of the Communist Party, underscored the importance and necessity of hosting the Olympics as a means to invigorate the nation's spirit and propel economic advancement (Wei et al., 2012, p.32). Economically, the Asian Games in 1990 projected China's resurgence as an Asian superpower, showcasing its determination of open-door policy, economic reforms, and transition from a planned economy to a market economy (Galbraith & Lu, 2000, p.10). Additionally, hosting the Olympics was expected to transcend the derogatory label of 'the sick man of Asia', fostering a sense of national pride (Wei et al., 2012, p.31). Despite the failure of the bid for the 2000 Olympic Games, China's determination to host again persisted.

The strong desire of the Chinese people to host MSEs was evident through the millions of volunteers, which gives China an advantage in bidding and hosting compared to other countries (Jeong, 2021, p.102). A GALLUP survey reveals that 13 million people in Beijing, equivalent to 94.9% of the city's population, supported the idea of hosting Olympics, with 94% expressing willingness to volunteer (Liu, 2001, p.10). Beijing also sought to host the 2001 Summer Universiade, known as the 'Small Olympics' due to its scale, aiming not only

to showcase enthusiasm for reviving university sports in China but also to enhance its chances of winning the major Olympic bid (Chu, 2018, p.1310). Hence, in China, it appears that hosting MSEs appears to offer a harmonious convergence of interests. The government aims to foster unity among the populace through the events, while citizens voluntarily come together to assist in organizing them, thereby further reinforcing social cohesion.

China's approach to hosting MSEs and other sports competitions entails a strategic progression, utilizing lower-tier sports events as stepping stones to secure bids for higher-level ones. This method finds parallels in the tactics employed by Rio de Janeiro, which orchestrated the Pan American Games in 2007 before developing a bid for the Summer Olympics (Horne, 2017, p.331). Similar strategies have been observed in Chinese second-tier cities like Guangzhou and Hangzhou. Guangzhou sequentially hosted the World Team Table Tennis Championships in 2008 and the Asian Games in 2010. Hangzhou followed suit, hosting the FINA World Swimming Championships (25m) in 2018 and then the Asian Games in 2022 (postponed to 2023). This tactic, as delineated by Chu (2018, p.1323), aligns with the notion that all events held within China serve as leverage for the capital city, Beijing, to vie for Olympic hosting rights. This involves employing MSEs of lower prominence to negotiate with the IOC or other international sports organizations, aiming to secure supports among voting members. To illustrate, subsequent to the critique of Beijing's lavish hosting of the 2008 Summer Olympics, the Nanjing 2014 Summer Youth Games was strategically used as a means to reshape international perception. This endeavour aimed to bolster Beijing's prospects of securing the 2022 Winter Olympics, with the then-IOC President Thomas Bach scheduled to meet with President Xi Jinping, facilitating a shift in perspective (Chu, 2018, p.1316).

In tandem with the pursuit of hosting various single-sport events in cities of different administrative levels and economic strength, a strategic approach rooted in the origins of athletes or the concept of 'traditional advantage projects' is commonly employed. This tactic involves leveraging the prominence of specific athletes or disciplines as superior bidding assets, particularly for international-level sporting events, including World Championships (Yang & Zhang, 2019, p.11). This approach is exemplified by instances such as Nanning, a city in Guangxi Province, successfully hosting the 2014 World Artistic Gymnastics



Championships due to its association with Li Ning, a three-time Olympic gold medalist (Silacci, 2014). Similarly, Zhejiang Province in East China, a source of aquatic athletes for the Chinese national team and the birthplace of numerous Olympic medalists, secured the right to host the 2018 FINA World Swimming Championships (25m) (Liu, 2014). An additional driving force behind the proliferation of sports events within China is the desire of international sports organizations to expand their influence and popularity in this vast market, especially after the 2008 Olympic Games (Zheng et al., 2018, p.497). The allure of tapping into China's substantial market potential is compelling. Moreover, the country's resilience in weathering the global economic downturn that began in 2008 serves as another pivotal factor contributing to the flourishing landscape of sports events within China (Chu, 2018, p.1314).

Securing the hosting right for the 2008 Summer Olympics in 2001 marked a pivotal moment in China's sports history. The earlier setback of losing the bid for the 2000 Olympics was a critical juncture affirming China's growing political and international prominence (Jeong, 2021, p.100). Leveraging the Olympic platform strategically, China, second only to the United States in hard power, uses the event to amplify both its domestic and global soft power (Blanchard & Lu, 2012, p.573). China's confidence to bid for the Olympics twice within eight years reflects its robust economic growth and increasing significance in global politics (Wei et al., 2012, p.36).

The Beijing 2008 Olympics is widely recognized as a pivotal success for China. Beyond serving as a sporting spectacle, it enhanced China's global reputation and solidified its national identity. The Games symbolized Beijing's ambition to surpass its regional counterparts, such as Tokyo and Seoul, and to assert its position among the world's leading global cities (Barclay, 2009, p.65). Jeong (2021) underscores the multifaceted significance of hosting the 2008 Olympics for China. It allowed the country to showcase its culture and historical legacy globally (p.96), demonstrate commitment to peaceful development and harmonious coexistence with Western nations (p.97), attract international investments (p.97), foster domestic unity post-natural disasters, position Beijing as a tourist destination (p.98), and reshape its international reputation by countering prior negative perceptions (p.100), especially presenting a fresh perspective on human rights and governance (Murray, 2012, p.582).

In 2013, Beijing and Zhangjiakou, both in the province of Hebei, submitted a bid to host the 2022 Winter Olympics (Reuters, 2013). The period spanning the Pyeongchang 2018, Tokyo 2020, and Beijing 2022 Olympics, encompassing two Winter and one Summer Games, has been coined the 'East Asian Era' by Horne and Manzenreiter (2017, p.6), highlighting the gathering of MSEs in East Asia during this time. China's bid for the Winter Olympics was motivated by its desire to achieve parity with Korea and Japan in terms of hosting MSEs, especially given the unlikelihood of hosting the FIFA World Cup due to the backwardness of China's football industry (Reuters, 2022). President Xi Jinping emphasized the importance of Beijing's participation in the bidding competition, stating that winning the hosting rights would cultivate the belief among the public that China's comprehensive prowess had surpassed that of European democracies. Additionally, he aimed to portray his leadership as instrumental in facilitating China's rejuvenation on the global stage (Chu, 2021, p.1891). The Beijing Winter Olympics marked a monumental triumph, earning the distinction of being the most widely watched Winter Games in history. Its impact was anticipated to usher in a new era for ice and snow sports, both domestically and globally (Li, 2022, p.44). Anchored in sustainability, athlete well-being, and economic viability, the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics mirrored the foundation laid by the triumphant Beijing 2008 Summer Olympics, renowned for its eco-consciousness, humanitarian ethos, and innovative prowess (Chu, 2018, p.1037).

In summary, the 2008 Summer Olympics functioned as a welcoming gesture from China to the international community, effectively highlighting the nation's economic prosperity and diplomatic harmony (Barclay, 2009, p.65). Additionally, this event capitalized on opportune timing to host other sports events, showcasing China's robust sports market and potential for further sports development (Chien, 2008). In contrast, the 2022 Winter Olympics in China served as a platform to showcase the country's global stature and influence as a superpower, with less emphasis on gaining international respect (Aredy, 2022). Internally, the Winter Olympics has catalyzed increased participation in mass sports, particularly boosting the popularity of winter sports across China. This has generated a sense of satisfaction and pride among both the Chinese populace and the government (CNN, 2022). Externally, it builds upon the Olympic legacy, which previously engaged 346 million individuals in winter sports, further cementing China's position as a key player in the global sporting community (IOC,

2023). The Winter Olympics presented an avenue for China to actively engage in and potentially shape the trajectory of international sports, and the dissemination of ideology, with the overarching goal of ‘enhancing the friendship among the people in different countries’ (Beijing Sports University Centre for Olympic Studies, 2021, p.96). By assuming the role of host, China could bolster international interactions, participate in global dialogues, and fortify its global impact (Smith & Jett, 2022; McDoll, 2022).

From the preceding discussion, it can be deduced that the significance of participating and hosting Major Sporting Events (MSEs) in China saw a gradual evolution. Over the past century, China has progressed its role in the engagement of MSEs through four distinct stages: ‘strengthening the nation through sports’ prior to reform and opening up, ‘emerging as a prominent Asian entity’ in the 1990s, ‘debut on global stage’ in the early 21st century, and ‘participating in global affairs’ in recent years. The IS discussed in this study, functioning as a communication arm interfacing with international media during MSEs, is intricately interwoven with China's sports policies and strategies for sports communication.

The literature surveyed offers insights crucial to this study. Firstly, the close connection between sports in China and the nation's image, strength, and pride, particularly in the context of hosting MSEs, underscores the necessity of analyzing the IS in these events through the lens of China's approach to and utilization of sports. Secondly, the cultural significance of MSEs, which serves as lenses for international audience for host countries and cities, raises pertinent questions regarding the focus and processes of IS office in orchestrating such events. To discover how the IS office navigates and prioritizes the responsibilities emerges as a valuable area for investigation. Thirdly, China's Elite Sport strategy, fostering a robust link between athletes and the nation, prompts inquiry into whether the IS in China reflects or incorporates elements of this strategy. A pertinent avenue for study lies in exploring whether the IS office is aware of this link and how the IS office tackles the ‘heroic’ character of Chinese athletes. Finally, given the opening up of China's substantial sports market through the successful hosting of two Olympic Games, a potential area of exploration revolves around examining the development and use of translation in the IS, particularly in the bilingual context, over the past 14 years. Such an investigation could provide insights into the maturity and evolution of IS practices in China, following the sports policies in China from cultivating

athletes to hosting sports events.

## **2.3 Introduction of the IS (Information Service) and its presence in China**

### **2.3.1 The development of the IS and its definition**

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the Information Service (IS), this section will discuss its position within the Organizing Committee (OC), its historical evolution, as well as the purpose and significance it holds in the hosting of MSEs. Given the limited volume of existing research on the IS, this study aims to provide an overview of its inception and scholarly exploration. By doing so, it seeks to dig deeper into the relevance and importance of IS initiatives in the context of China.

#### ***Derived from the Department of Media Operations***

The Olympic Games transcends its role as a simple sporting event, representing a captivating media spectacle (Chen, 2018, p.71), and the largest media spectacle globally (Bjoerner, 2007, p.236). Significantly, the media's portrayal and evaluation of the event wields substantial influence over its perceived success. Given that the majority of the global audience experiences the event through media channels—be it broadcast or written (Jiang & Guo, 2018, p.74)—the media's narrative holds immense sway. Former IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch cogently stated that ‘the media are the ultimate judges of the Games’ (Liu,C., 2022; Wang, 2008).

During the 2008 Beijing Olympics, a staggering 26,000 media representatives covered the event, outnumbering the roughly 10,500 participating athletes. Similarly, the 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Olympics featured over 14,000 journalists alongside 3,500 athletes. Among the diverse receivers of the Olympic Games, the media stands as the largest contingent, underscoring its undeniable significance (Chen, 2018, p.71).

Within the organizational framework of the OC, the orchestration of the Olympic Games consistently involves a specialized department—the Department of Media Operations. This department operates in tandem with another entity known as ‘the Department of Media and Communications’, collectively forming the nucleus of the Olympic Games’ interaction with the media (Li, 2012, p.1201).

These two services, despite appearing to share a similar purpose, diverge significantly in their roles. The latter, essentially akin to what is commonly termed ‘the Department of News and Communication’, is responsible for nurturing media relationships and crafting communication materials that favour of the host country (Cook et al., 2022, p.2; Shang & Wei, 2020, p.657). However, it is important to note that conflating Media Operations with mere ‘Communication’ would be a substantial misconception (Chen, 2018, p.71).

The fundamental role of the Department of Media Operations is to provide ‘services’ tailored to the distinctive demands of media work, which is a vital task in the preparations for the Olympic Games. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) classifies the media into two primary categories—Broadcasters and Press. Consequently, the work of media operations is bifurcated into Broadcasting Operations and Press Operations (Chen et al.; 2013, p.22). Within Broadcasting Operations, the main recipients of service are the Olympic Broadcasting Services (OBS), responsible for public signal production, and the Rights-Holding Broadcasters. This work takes place at the International Broadcasting Center (IBC) and various other event venues (Shang & Wei, 2020, p.657).

Conversely, the press media encompasses written media and photojournalists, alongside non-rights-holding television broadcasters. These professionals operate from the Main Press Center (MPC), along with diverse media outlet venues. The MPC serves as the ‘central hub’ for all registered media during the Olympics, and functions as the ‘base camp’ for the Department of Media Operations. Media operations encompass five key domains: Main Press Center (MPC), Venue Media Centers (VMCs), Information Service (IS), Photo Service, and Press Service. Of these, two sectors bear particular significance to this study: the MPC and the Olympic Information Service (OIS) (Chen, 2018, p.72; Chen et al.; 2013, p.88; Jiang, 2012, p.23).

When discussing the IS, a question arises: Since journalists are responsible for covering

the Olympic Games, why does the IOC establish the OIS? To address this, firstly, this relates closely to the allocation of media quotas. The number of accredited media granted access to an Olympic Games is limited. Once these quotas are distributed, it becomes exceedingly challenging for any other media entity to cover all the competitions of interest, let alone all events (Chen, 2018, p.72). Secondly, both Summer and Winter Olympics have dozens of disciplines and hundreds of events. Finding a single media outlet proficient in every sport, let alone each discipline, proves nearly impossible (Lv & Guo, 2022, p.28). In this context, the necessity for professional support becomes evident, and this is precisely what the OIS offers. This collaboration ensures that media outlets can provide thorough and adept reporting on the Games (Chen, 2018, p.72; Hu, 2021, p.72).

The primary target audience of the IS is the media itself—it is a means of aiding them in their reporting endeavors. However, it is crucial to note that this service is to help the media to complete their reports, not to replace the work of the media (He, 2016, p.27). The official IOC Media social network accounts (Twitter, Youtube, Instagram) introduce the OIS as ‘a service providing professional reporting and photography from Olympic and Paralympic events licence-free for editorial use only’. It indicates two important aspects of the OIS: that this service is operated by the IOC, and that the information provided by the OIS is for further editing. The overarching goal is to optimize the fulfillment of journalists' operational requirements (Hu, 2021, p.71).

In accordance with international conventions, each competition venue is mandated to establish a mixed zone—a designated area where athletes interact with the media post-event and use it as their exit route of the competition field (Jiang, 2012, p.23). In the Olympic Games, the mixed zone comprises two segments. The first part caters to television media interviews, overseen by the Broadcasting Operation. The second part accommodates written media interviews, managed by the Press Operation. The OIS, directly managed by the IOC, generally holds priority in capturing television media interviews without disruption. It often secures the opportunity to interview athletes ahead of other written media immediately because the order in the mixed zone typically follows this sequence: television media first, OIS interviews next, followed by other written media. The OIS has the privilege of recording interviews conducted by television media, provided that faces are not shown and there are no

interruptions during the interviews. Additionally, it holds the exclusive right to conduct interviews with athletes immediately following television media interviews, preempting other written media outlets (Chen et al., 2013, p.22; Zhang et al., 2019, p.46). This position enables the IS to disseminate information more rapidly and accurately. Compared to traditional written media outlets, the IS excels in terms of publication speed, information quality, and comprehensiveness.

The OIS is formerly known as the ‘Olympic News Service’ (ONS) (Zhang et al., 2019, p.76). The decision to change the name from ‘ONS’ to ‘OIS’ is driven by the desire to avoid potential confusion with the term ‘News Service’, which could be equated with a conventional news agency. In this context, ‘Information’ refers to raw and unprocessed factual data, while ‘News’ is information that has undergone processing and may contain subjective judgments introduced by the media (Chen, 2018, p.72). The ‘IOC Technical Manual on Media’ provides two explicit definitions. Firstly, it clarifies that ‘the OIS is not a news service’ and it does not aim to replace the role of media. Secondly, it underscores that the content produced by the OIS ought to be devoid of bias, preferences, or external influences (IOC, 2005, p.139). The shift from ‘ONS’ to ‘OIS’ reflects the IOC's commitment to upholding objectivity and accuracy in disseminating information. The IOC recruits elite sports journalists and writers from all over the world, and distributes them in various venues, where they collect the key information that occur inside and outside the Olympic Games, and then process these information in a comprehensive, systematic, and professional manner to the media (Chen, 2018, p.72).

The figure below shows the specific location of the IS office in the OC (adapted from Zhang et al., 2019, p.88).

Figure 2.1: The location of the IS in the OC in an MSE



Drawing from the aforementioned literature on media operations and the positioning of the IS office within the OC's structure, a crucial research framework for this study emerges. Firstly, the IS, established by the IOC, primarily caters to written media and does not engage in other communication channels like TV broadcasting. Secondly, the purview of the IS falls under the Department of Media Operations, distinct from the Department of News & Communication. This distinction implies that the IS is not involved in public opinion guidance, ideological construction, or related political activities. However, it is noteworthy that the information handled by the IS office is collected and edited by trained professionals. Simultaneously, the Olympic Information Service (OIS) represents an output of the IOC. In this editorial process, while it is arguable to assert that the OIS is devoid of political nuances and interests, it raises questions about the potential influence of political considerations in the editing process.

#### ***A product of the IOC's Strategy to cope with the media in the Internet Era***

The evolution of media operations and the Olympic Information Service (OIS) is intricately linked to the application of internet technology in the media industry and the evolving policies of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) regarding media engagement. The IOC has consistently sought to strike a balance between promoting the Olympic Spirit and generating revenue since its foundation. By looking through the policies that the IOC has adopted to reach a cooperative relationship with the media, it is possible to view the history of the OIS in a new timeline, especially given the fact that the Olympic Games can now be disseminated through Internet platforms and mobile devices (Bjoerner, 2007, p.236).

Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, print media played a significant role in the growing popularity of sports, subsequently driving up newspaper readership. For the Olympics, the backing of newspapers proved essential for the planning and triumph of the inaugural Olympic congress, convened at La Sorbonne University in 1894 (Ramon, 2018, p.85). During the 1912 Stockholm Olympics, the count of authorized print media outlets exceeded 500 (Moragas, 1992, p.133). It can be seen that the written (paper) media is the first media to participate in the Olympic Games coverage.



Radio was introduced to the Olympic Games in the 1920s, and then television followed in the late 1940s. The advent of television propelled the advancement of sports by enabling live coverage of sporting events and incorporating visual and auditory elements into the narrative of sports (Šiljak et al., 2014, p.474). With the aim of emphasizing the importance of the Olympic Games in society while also promoting the sale of TV broadcasting rights, the IOC introduced free public information. This was done to ensure comprehensive coverage and widespread distribution of Olympic Games updates. Significantly, news is widely seen as a public good, with media outlets striving to reach a wide-ranging audience and provide public information without any cost (He, 2016, p.30). This is the era that the media, whether written or broadcast, were able to gain useful information to report from the IOC. Although TV and broadcasting have an overwhelming advantage and draw more attention by the IOC, the written media is still an integral part (Ramon, 2018, p.87; Jiang, 2012, p.23). One could argue that this represents the IOC's initial attempt to exert control over media publications, aiming to alleviate the burden on the media while fostering a compromise between both parties.

In the 1970s, the widening access to television put sports competitions in a global stage, emphasizing the importance of media for both communication and financial purposes. This also led to the issue of balancing the distribution and limited access to Olympic-related information. The IOC addressed this issue by classifying news (written) as free information for the public to use, while considering live broadcasts as exclusive content (He, 2016, p.31). The most significant action in this period was to provide a unified form of free information delivery for the public, run by the IOC, and then distinguish it from paid information. Written media, despite lacking unified service or management, has not lost its significance. It continues to be a crucial mode of communication, playing a complementary and supportive role alongside television rather than engaging in direct competition (Jiang, 2012, p.23). Traditional television media fundamentally operate as a mass communication platform. Its reporting perspective is inclined towards public preferences, often highlighting gold medals and prominent athletes, thereby significantly limiting the coverage of athletes to a selected group (He, 2016, p.34), resulting in a coverage gap for the written media to fill. Therefore, the IOC provides journalists with unrestricted entry to the Olympic zones, along with necessary

facilities, and the count of officially recognized journalists expand substantially, exceeding 7,500 individuals (Adi, 2013, p.51). This is a significant task for the IOC and certain measures were taken in the following decade to help to manage it.

As the Internet underwent significant advancement, the IOC initiated actions to enhance approaches to meet the changing needs of the media. This transformation began by focusing on the written media, which once again constituted the largest segment. In the 1988 Summer Olympics in Seoul, the IOC used the telegraph network to issue a paper bulletin to provide information to reporters, which allowed them to have access to Olympic-related information anytime they wish (Jiang, 2012, p.23). This is seen as the first attempt of the IOC to serve the written media, and the protocol of the ONS (Olympic News Service).

In 1992, Local Area Network (LAN) technology was introduced and put into practice during the 25th Barcelona Olympic Games. This marks the inaugural instance of a computer-controlled system for managing and organizing competitions and information in the Olympic Games. The system is called 'Alcatel', a robust network infrastructure, catering to the needs of the written media by disseminating diverse information (Palacios, 1992, p.42). In the MPC (Media Press Centre), all competition results were printed on red paper exclusively and sent to reporters, while other information are printed on ordinary white paper (Sina News, 2005). This encompasses a local area network where individual arenas could function autonomously, yet a singular system generates real-time results for the games (Zhang et al., 2006, p.1607).

In 1996, during the 26th Atlanta Olympic Games, the concept of WAN (Wide Area Network) was introduced and implemented (Zhang et al., 2006, p.1607). The Atlanta Olympic News Agency (AONA) was established, serving as the exclusive news source for the IOC throughout the Games. Its primary role was to ensure the timely distribution of news and information to both accredited and non-accredited media entities. Accredited media had access to the Main Press Center (MPC) and competition venues, while non-accredited media did not. Personnel from AONA stationed at the MPC played a vital role in providing media-related services, including supplying schedules for news conferences and events, managing prominent news conferences, transportation schedules etc. The information produced by AONA was distributed via Info'96, the 1996 Olympic Games World Wide Web

site, and local news outlets. Printed copies were distributed at competition venues, MPC, and International Broadcasting Center (IBC). Info'96 is considered the first information system applied to the Olympic News Service in history (Schwartz, 1996). However, it faced challenges, receiving negative feedback due to errors, timeliness issues, and lack of classification in the information output of each competition venue. Despite these challenges, the attempt to digitally transmit information during the 1996 Atlanta Olympics advanced the development of the OIS (Jiang, 2014, p.14).

In late 1998, following the Salt Lake City Winter Olympics bid scandal (allegations of using bribery of the OC to win the hosting right), the IOC confronted its most profound crisis in over a century, necessitating a period of transformation and evolution. As the Olympic Games adopted a market-driven operational approach, tensions between humanistic ideals (the promotion of the Olympic Spirit) and economic interests emerged (He, 2016, p.32). With the popularity of the Internet, which champions notions of increased liberty, transparency, and sharing, the conventional boundaries between the media and their audience were dismantled (The Global Development Research Centre, 2019). At this pivotal juncture, with the imperative to sustain profitability for the IOC and alleviate tensions with media outlets, the ONS, following the protocol established in the 1996 ANOA, was formally implemented during the 2000 Sydney Olympics.

By the time of the Sydney Olympic Games in 2000, a truly modern news service began to take shape, because the ONS was officially included in the Olympic host city contract (Jiang, 2014, p.14). The IOC standardized the ONS as an official business, with a comprehensive operating manual thicker than a large dictionary (Sina News, 2005). The Info'2000 system enabled users to obtain information through more than 2,000 workstations and electronic information kiosks in the Olympic Village and the competition venues (Zhang et al., 2006, p.1607). The Sydney Olympic Games holds a significant position as the inaugural instance of the ONS, recognized by both academic and media communities. Its organizational framework and operational methods continue to be utilized in the present day. Additionally, the event played a crucial role in nurturing numerous ONS professionals who subsequently serve the following Olympic Games.

Driven by the guidance of the IOC, the 2006 Turin Winter Olympics drew upon the

approaches employed in prior Summer Olympics and effectively implemented media operations and the ONS (Jiang, 2014, p.15). Subsequently, this approach was adopted by specific sports bodies like FIFA and IAAF, alongside sports organizations in certain countries and regions (Jiang, 2012, p.23). As a result, the ONS reached a level of maturity during these international competitions.

During the 2016 Rio Olympic Games, the IOC introduced the 'Regulations on the Editing and Use of Olympic Assets by Media Organizations'. This marked the first instance of formal guidelines for managing the Olympic assets. The document stated that the IOC acknowledged the media's significant role in covering the Olympic Games, but that the IOC was responsible for upholding the integrity and values of the Games. This illustrates that with the transition to digital and social platforms, Olympic assets and the exclusive privileges of Olympic partners face potential threats (He, 2016, p.33). During the Rio Olympics, two major reforms of the ONS took place: firstly, the ONS officially changed its name to the OIS (Olympic Information Service) (Chu, 2011, p.83); secondly, the IOC took absolute control over the OIS, that is, the OIS (previously ONS), which used to be organized by the IOC and paid by the OC, begins to be paid and organized by the IOC itself.

By analyzing the evolution of the IOC's media strategies across various decades, it becomes evident that these strategies have adapted in response to shifts in the media landscape, the balance between media supply and demand, the degree of media freedom, and the changing media platforms. In the era dominated by television, the IOC's management model emphasized hierarchical control over information sources. However, with the advent of the Internet, the IOC faced a diverse array of media outlets and individuals beyond traditional sources. This expansion, wherein anyone could act as a reporter, posed a considerable challenge in regulating information sources (He, 2016, p.34). The characteristics of information dissemination in the new media era offer advantages such as rapid and convenient access to information for audiences. However, this comes with an increased vulnerability to the rapid dissemination of inaccurate information and negative news (Zhou & Zhang, 2016, p.6). Consequently, effective information management is seen as essential to develop alongside advancements in media technology. When interacting with the media, the IOC is designed to harmonize the efforts of multiple stakeholders, establish mechanisms of

trust and coordination, and engage in negotiations guided by Olympic Spirit. This multifaceted process aims to strike a dynamic equilibrium between openness, interaction, and effective governance (Ren, 2013, p.256). Operating in a manner analogous to the IOC's management of televised broadcast information, the OIS functions with a focus on text-based content, serving not only as a facilitator of media operations but also as a monitor of information accessed by the media. This approach aligns with the attributes of the Internet era's platforms. It is noteworthy that while primarily serving media requirements, the establishment of the OIS is also a strategic move by the IOC to foster a harmonious media relationship in the context of the Internet age.

Examining the relationship between the IOC and the media through this lens provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the data analyzed in this study. Firstly, the OIS serves a dual purpose established by the IOC – offering support to the media while concurrently promoting the Olympic Games. In the face of challenges related to controlling online and self-media, the OIS serves as a vital conduit, enabling the IOC and the OC (Organizing Committee) to disseminate accurate and unified information to traditional media outlets. This strategic approach not only safeguards the integrity of the Olympic spirit but can also be viewed as a measure to restrict access to the event solely for accredited media, ensuring a controlled and curated flow of information. Secondly, the evolution of the Internet and the proliferation of information platforms have significantly refined the precision of the OIS's services. Journalists now experience condensed time frames and expanded spatial access in gathering information. The establishment of the OIS emerges as a crucial step for both the IOC and the media to align with their evolving requirements and effectively navigate the impact of advancing technology on the dissemination of Olympic-related information.

### **2.3.2 China's adaptation of the IS - adding translation to enhance the communication of the MSEs**

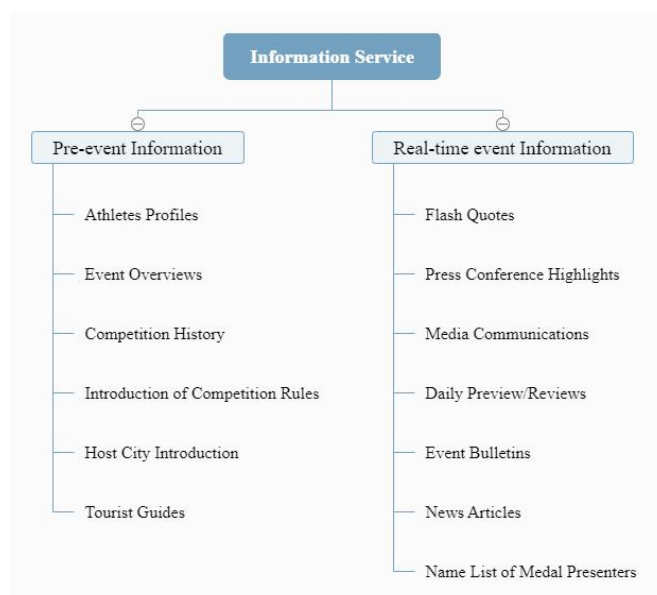
Since the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, Media Operations and the IS have been launched in almost all international sports events held in China. On the basis of the original

operating framework of the OIS, the IS in China adds a translation process, delivering a corresponding IS service in Chinese in accordance with that in English. The focus of this research lies in the translation process of offering the Chinese IS. Therefore, this section will review the basic work process, content, job setting of the IS, and the situation of the IS in China.

### ***The Working System of the IS***

The IS primarily provides two major categories of information: pre-event information and real-time event information. Pre-event information encompasses athlete profiles, event overviews, competition history, the introduction of competition rules, introductions to the host city, and, in some cases, even tourist guides provided by certain OCs (organizing committees). On the other hand, real-time event information encompasses flash quotes, press conference highlights, media communications (everything the media needs to know from the OC, such as changes in transportation, venue adjustments, press conference schedules, etc.), daily previews/reviews, event bulletins (noteworthy results, new records, etc.), news articles (press releases and interviews, etc.), and name list of medal presenters (Jiang, 2014, p.17; Chen, 2018, p.71; Guo, 2016, p.123; Zhao, 2019, p.50). The specific structure of the IS can be outlined as following:

Figure 2.2: The types of contents offered by the Information Service



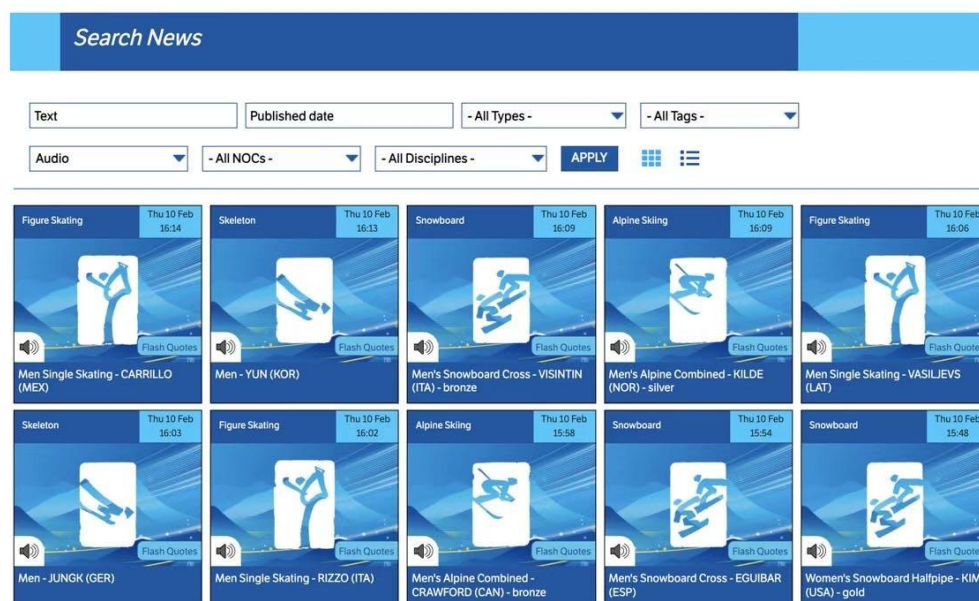
In the context of the Real-Time Event Information, the 'News Articles' category warrants further clarification. It has been previously highlighted (Section 2.3.1) that the IS provides information rather than news. However, the 'News Articles', also known as 'Comprehensive News', refers to 'long-piece manuscripts that can be directly used as news rather than information that needs to be edited, selected, or integrated' (Zhao, 2019, p.88). These manuscripts often provide content similar to a press release of the opening/closing ceremonies (press releases are important information to all media requiring a manuscript in a unified manner. The form of this release can be a message, alert, etc.), transcripts of leaders' speeches, in-depth interviews, or engaging pieces compiled by IS experts through amalgamating multiple flash quotes (for instance, a collection of amusing quotes from a given day of competition). While these materials offer greater depth compared to other information, they are versatile and can be edited, extracted, processed, and used by reporters as news pieces (Zhao, 2019, p.88).

The IS operates as a vast and continuously updated database, affording reporters access to a wide array of information whenever needed. However, the demands of journalists are constantly evolving. In 2012 (Jiang, p.23), the three types of information most frequently used by the media proved to be event bulletins, athlete profiles and flash quotes. In 2016, flash quotes and press conference highlights were the most favoured by the media (Guo, p.125). In 2019 the media's demands shifted again, and while flash quotes remained popular, news articles and previews were also used frequently (Zhao, p.201).

The INFO system is an Internet-based platform, with its dedicated software platform named the 'Information System', abbreviated as INFO (Liang, 2013, p.50). All writing tasks running through the IS office are executed on this platform, with personnel in various roles possessing distinct permissions tailored to their responsibilities (Chen, 2018, p.72). Ultimately, the media also utilizes the INFO system to access information and avail themselves of services. The INFO system remains subject to continuous updates in alignment with the evolution of network technology. From 2018, the Olympic Games' INFO system has been made accessible via diverse mobile clients, including smartphones and tablets. This enables media personnel to engage with the system during downtime, such as while waiting for transportation or meals (IOC Media, 2019). The picture below presents the terminal interface

of the IS for the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics:

Figure 2.3: The interface of INFO in Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics



The IS office usually has three positions: IS journalists, editors, and coordinators. The IS journalists are responsible for collecting information from each competition venue, press conference, or athletes' village, wearing vests with an 'IS' print, signaling their difference from other media (Chen et al., 2013, p.101). In global events like the Olympic Games, the IS often recruits journalists who possess interview skills in languages other than English. This strategy ensures a comprehensive coverage of interviewees from various linguistic backgrounds. Given that these IS reporters are adept at bilingual communication, they typically adhere to international conventions and submit their articles in English to editors. The editors, however, usually excel in English and journalism, are responsible for reviewing and editing the articles submitted by the IS journalists, and then publishing them on the INFO system. After the editors publish the articles, if they find any errors or inappropriate expressions, they can withdraw them, make revisions and upload them again (Zhao, 2019, p.133).

The literature examined above enriches this study with several pivotal insights. Firstly, it reveals that the primary working language of the IS office is English. Secondly, it emphasizes the consistent and noteworthy interest generated by flash quotes among the media. Thirdly, due to its affiliation with the OC, the IS boasts an extensive network of interview channels, enabling it to provide 'exclusive information'. This understanding is important for the



subsequent section's focus, which delves into the specific landscape of the IS in China.

### ***The IS in China***

Starting from the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games and continuing with subsequent major events like the 2010 Guangzhou Asian Games, the 2011 Shenzhen World Universiade, and 2014 Nanjing Youth Olympic Games, China has embraced and effectively implemented the concept of media operations and the IS for large-scale events. The following table provides an overview of non-professional international and Asian-level MSEs held in China since 2008, and shows whether or not the IS business was involved.

Table 2.1: A list of International Sports Events held in China since 2008 and the involvement of the IS

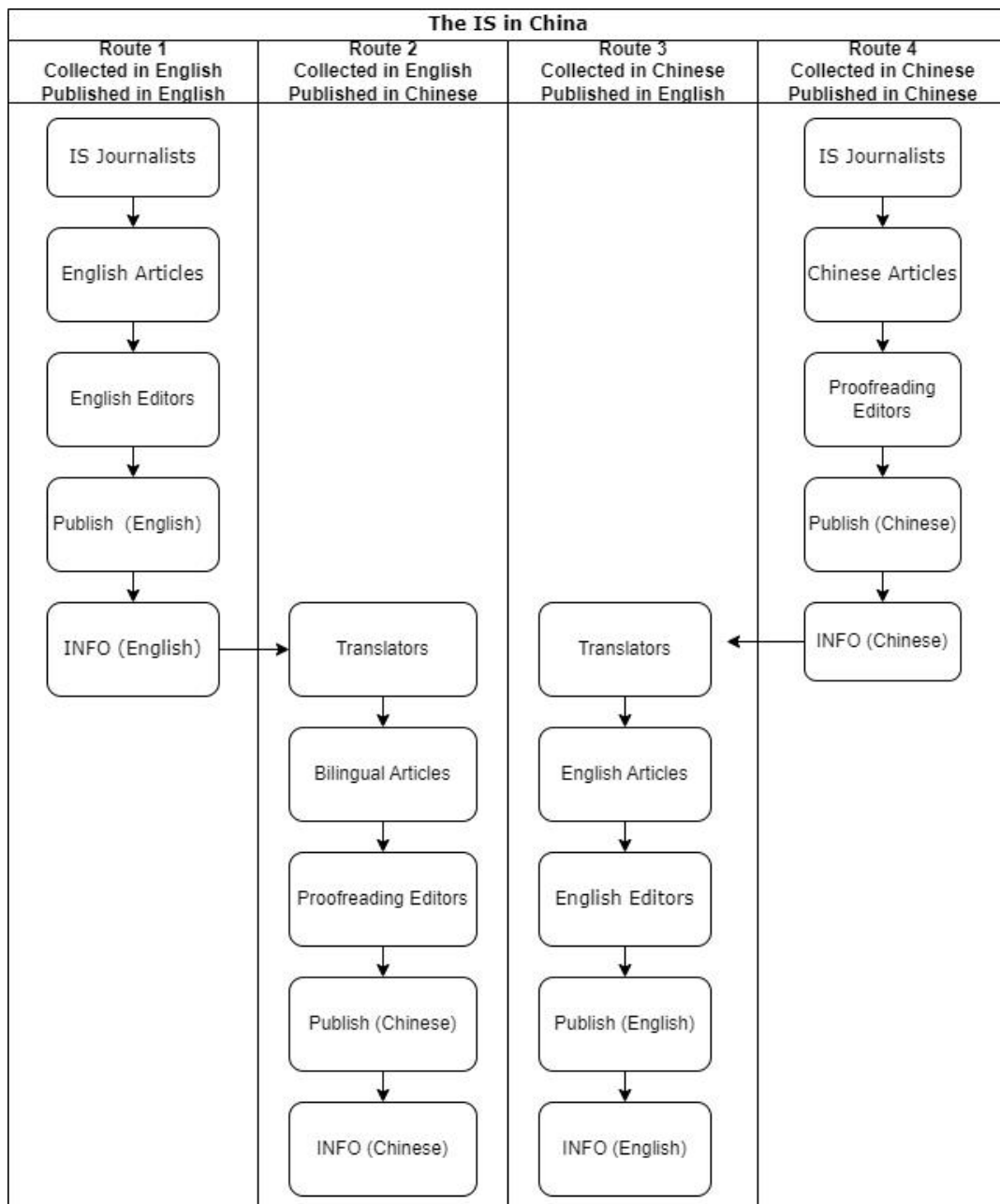
<b>Year</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>Sports</b>	<b>Events</b>	<b>IS</b>
2022	Beijing, Zhangjiakou	Multi-Sport	Winter Olympic Games and Paralympics	✓
2022	Hangzhou	Multi-Sport	Asian Games (Postponed to 2023)	✓
2021	Chengdu	Multi-Sport	Summer Universiade (Postponed to 2023)	✓
2021	Sanya	Multi-Sport	Asian Beach Games (Postponed to 2023)	✓
2021	Shantou	Multi-Sport	Asian Youth Games (Canceled)	✓
2019	Wuhan	Multi-Sport	Military World Games	✓
2018	Hangzhou	Swimming	FINA World Swimming Championships (25m)	✓
2016	Shanghai, Beijing, Shenzhen	Football	International Champions Cup	✓
2015	Shenzhen, Guangzhou, Shanghai	Football	International Champions Cup	✓
2015	Beijing	Athletics	IAAF World Championships in Athletics	
2015	Suzhou	Table Tennis	World Table Tennis Championships	✓
2015	Kunshan	Badminton	Badminton World Championships	
2014	Nanning	Gymnastics	World Artistic Gymnastics Championships	✓
2014	Nanjing	Multi-Sport	Summer Youth Olympics	✓
2013	Guangzhou	Badminton	BWF World Championships	
2013	Nanjing	Multi-Sport	Asian Youth Games	✓
2011	Shenzhen	Multi-Sport	Summer Universiade	✓
2011	Shanghai	Aquatics	FINA World Championships	
2010	Guangzhou	Multi-Sport	Asian Games	✓

2009	Harbin	Multi-Sport	Winter Universiade	
2009	Nanjing, Suzhou, Wuxi, Changzhou, Yangzhou	Handball	World Women's Handball Championship	
2008	Beijing	Multi-Sport	Summer Olympic Games and Paralympics	✓
2008	Taiyuan	Cycling	UCI BMX World Championships	
2008	Beijing	Fencing	World Fencing Championships	
2008	Guangzhou	Table Tennis	World Team Table Tennis Championships	

As illustrated in the table above, it is evident that the IS has played a prominent role in the majority of these events, evidencing its role beyond Olympic sporting events. The Xinhua News Agency assumed full responsibility for managing media operations and the IS in the 2008 Beijing Olympics, and has been managing these international events ever since (Jiang, 2012, p.24). Xinhua News Agency, also known as the New China News Agency, is the official state news agency and the largest media entity in China. It possesses several distinct advantages when it comes to providing the IS for large-scale events: extensive operational experience, diverse professional resources, standardized operating protocols, rigorous quality control, and expert policy insight (Hu, 2021, p.73). However, the Xinhua News Agency did not participate the OIS for the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics (Shang & Wang, 2020, p.657), for the reason that the OIS has been taken over by the IOC since 2016 (Section 2.3.1).

The engagement of translation has made the publication process more interwoven. Providing bilingual contents in the IS in China has led to a more intricate team structure, encompassing five distinct roles. These roles generally consist of IS journalists, English editors, translators, proofreading editors, and coordinators. The specific responsibilities associated with each position remain consistent, yet the publication process has become more complex. This process involves four routes, as outlined in the figure below (adapted from from Lv & Guo, 2022, p.27; Zhao, 2019, p.93):

Figure 2.4: The publication process of the bilingual IS in MSEs in China



Route 1 is a common IS publishing process. Due to the two-way translation work, there are 3 additional publishing processes. Route 3 is seldom employed in practice. This is because translators provide their translations directly to English editors, bypassing the proofreading phase with only translators involved. This route (Chinese to English) omits a critical quality control step, potentially compromising the accuracy and reliability of the information. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that the translation work within the IS in China predominantly follows route 2, as outlined by Lv and Guo (2022, p.27). The present research specifically concentrates on the roles of translators and proofreading editors, rendering route 2 the

primary focus of this study. This focus arises not only from the infrequency of Chinese-to-English translations within the IS office but also from recognizing that translation within the IS in China is a supplementary type of translation, which is applied only to adhere to the international convention that English should be the working language of the IS.

Within the IS team in China, journalists include Chinese journalists with strong English proficiency. Their role primarily centres on conducting interviews with Chinese athletes and coaches that traditional IS teams might not be able to engage with due to language barriers (Chen et al., 2013, p.71). Translators are typically chosen by either Xinhua News Agency or the OC. Selected translators undergo training and simulation exercises to qualify for their roles (Guo, 2016, p.123). The selection process for proofreading editors is notably more stringent than that for translators. These individuals are often experienced senior editors with expertise in translating news from Xinhua News Agency who are familiar with news manuscript standards, and may also be university professors with a deep understanding of translation skills and sports knowledge (Lv & Guo, 2022, p.28). Proofreading editors' role goes beyond proofreading and publishing English-to-Chinese translated articles to editing and publishing content that is originally written and published in Chinese, meaning they have a broad spectrum of responsibilities that extend beyond translation alone. The synergy between translators and proofreading editors, drawing from each other's strengths, enables them to collaboratively tackle the vital task of proofreading and editing with competence.

The decision to implement a bilingual IS in China was driven by several important factors. Firstly, it aligns with the IOC's requirements for delivering exemplary media services, showcasing China's ability to host international competitions at a high standard (Shang & Wei, 2020, p.657). Secondly, it aims to enhance information availability and meet the needs of the media (Chen, 2019, p.72), especially considering the English proficiency limitations among Chinese journalists. Thirdly, it enables foreign media to access and understand competition details about Chinese athletes, while also providing accurate and official information to Chinese media to prevent the spread of false or biased information (Chen, 2019, p.72). Fourthly, this initiative is geared towards increasing the international visibility of the event, fostering cooperation between Chinese and international sports media (Zhang et al., 2019, p.155), and promoting the development of China's sports journalism. Lastly, the bilingual IS

aims to boost the growth of China's sports information industry (Zhou & Zhang, 2016, p.8) and is potentially beneficial for nurturing more sports media talents (Zhao, 2019, p.41).

After a thorough examination of the IS in China, the following conclusions emerge as a theoretical foundation for this study: firstly, the introduction of a bilingual IS stands out as a distinctive feature of the IS in China, introducing a layer of complexity to IS operations through the inclusion of translation. Secondly, with a track record of over a decade, the IS in China has reached a level of operational maturity, potentially offering valuable insights. However, China's IS operating model is based on journalism. In other words, in China, the first batch of practitioners of the IS and related research on the IS are all based on the perspective of journalism or communication. Therefore, this study inevitably needs to use news translation as an entry point to explore translation in the IS. Thirdly, the management of IS operations in China is entrusted to Xinhua News Agency, the country's official news agency with a pivotal role in communication, providing a more authentic context for the analysis in the journalism aspect. It is worth noting that Xinhua News Agency has such a close connection with the government and comprehensively implements national news policies, which is naturally more likely to echo to national sentiment. This might be one of the reasons why it shoulders the mission of organizing the IS work. Fourthly, the meticulous selection process for translators and proofreading editors underscores the professional and intricate nature of translation within the IS in China, warranting further research into translation principles and skills. What is intriguing is that this rigorous selection process evaluates English proficiency, news writing skills, professional experience, and other factors separately. One could argue that this is due to the challenge of finding candidates who excel in all areas or because the responsibilities of each role vary. However, this challenge may also arise from the extensive scope of responsibilities within the IS, making it arduous to comprehensively evaluate candidates. Consequently, due to the impracticality of thoroughly assessing candidates' abilities across all facets of IS work, selection criteria such as translation experience or journalism skills are reluctantly emphasized, sometimes out of necessity.

## **2.4 The complexity of translation in the IS in MSEs in China: an overlap of interdisciplinary practice.**

This section will examine the literature concerning translation from various angles. It will encompass four primary subsections: an introduction to the concept of translation, an assessment of domestication and foreignization, a consideration of the complexity of news translation, and a reflection on the intricacies of translating sports content.

### **2.4.1 A brief introduction to translation - more than a transfer of meaning and culture**

Before discussing translation in the IS in MSEs in China, it is necessary to first discuss the primary meaning of translation and the important role of translators. The primary objective of translation is to transform the content presented in a text from one language into the form of another, from the ST (Source text) to TT (Target text) (Boukreris, 2011, p.62). As the field of translation studies has evolved, an increasing number of translators and theorists have come to recognize that translation is a considerably complex undertaking intertwined with cultural, poetic, and economic elements (Wang, F., 2014. p.2425). In the academic literature, translation is always conceived in a broader sense, such as a convergence between two languages and their respective cultures (Boukreris, 2011, p.62), a rewriting of the ST to conform to specific requirements established by the receiving system of the TT (Lefevere, 2016, p.vii), or an act of message transmission from the ST to the TT that is linked by translators (Ricoeur, 2006, p.4). Translation has been associated with various terms and concepts (Valdeón, 2020b, p.24), yet the most basic translation theory revolves around whether translation should be closer to TT or ST, that is, foreignization and domestication translation theories, which will be discussed in section 2.4.2.

As the executor of translation work, the role of translator is considerably as valuable as the original writer in the translation process. The translator's interpretation of the various cultural elements and meanings in the ST not only determines the translation strategies applied in the translation process, but also the final presentation of the TT, which is a form of

retelling of the ST with sensitivity to cultural context and meanings relevant to the readers of the TT (Maitland, 2017, p.6). When translators engage with the ST, they enter into a kind of dialogue with the ST writer. In this dynamic exchange, the translator and the ST writer occupy an equal footing, allowing the translator the freedom to carefully select words and phrases for the TT that resonate, rephrase the ST in various ways, and employ a diverse range of techniques to influence TT readers (Robinson, 1991, p.259). The translator's preferences, past experiences, aesthetic choices, and their ability to bridge comprehension between both cultures are critical factors that determine whether a translation is positively or negatively evaluated by readers in terms of familiarity and overall pleasantness, among other aspects (Koskinen, 2012, p.21). As mentioned above, translation scholars have evolved the concept of translation as a practice that involves cultural transformation within the discourse and linguistic realm.

In contrast, scholars in communication and journalism tend to view translation primarily as an integral component of news production, meaning a method to deliver news to different audience, more than just a word-for-word language transfer (Valdeón, 2018, p.253). In Valdeón's view (2023, p.256), contemporary journalism relies on a diverse range of resources, encompassing multiple languages and platforms to craft stories. Translation plays an integral role in journalism and serves as a tool of controlling information flow and agenda-setting (p.248-253). In all, translation scholars and journalist scholars acknowledge translators' ability to navigate the content (text flow) in the translation process and the specific 'filtering' role of translation. This section will be followed by a more detailed literature review in subsections 2.4.3 and 2.4.4 through news translation and sports translation, which are closely related to this study.

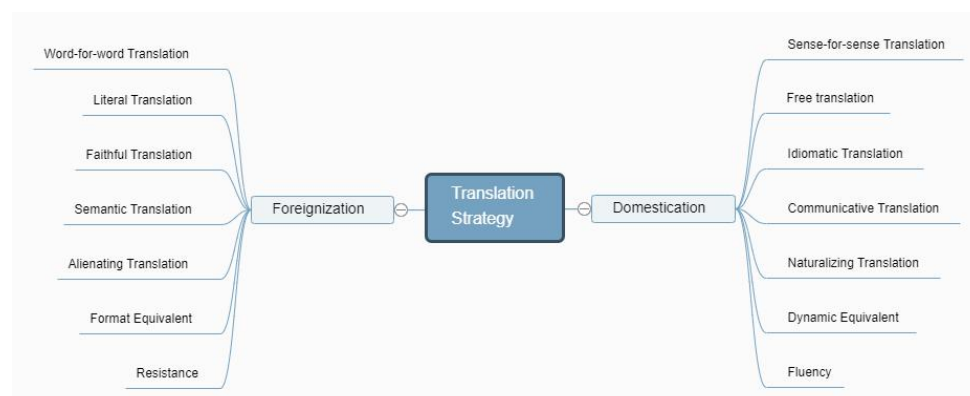
In addition to translators, numerous other factors influence the application of translation strategies. These factors include the style of the text and its data format (Bassnett, 2005, p.125), the content of the discourse (Van Poucke & Belikova, 2016, p.347), power dynamics between the source and target literary systems, the status of the receiving literary system, and the extent to which publishers can dictate the translation process (Chouit, 2019, p.81; Van Poucke & Belikova, 2016, p.347). The translator's interpretation of cultural elements within the ST and various variables related to the historical, social, and cultural context in which the

translation occurs also play a pivotal role (Bassnett, 2005, p.125; Chouit, 2019, p.81). Additional considerations include time constraints (Bassnett, 2005, p.120; Holland, 2013, p.337), the origin of the ST (e.g., first-hand or second-hand) (Holland, 2013, p.339), and the preferences and political standards of the target audience (Holland, 2013, p.339). Furthermore, the prominence of English as the primary language for global communication largely shapes translation strategies (Holland, 2013, p.341; Van Poucke & Belikova, 2016, p.347). While discussing each of these factors in detail is beyond the scope of this study, this research will focus on reviewing mainstream translation theories in China, specifically exploring TT of translation, to offer a more relevant framework for the study of translation in the IS in MSEs in China.

#### 2.4.2 Domestication and foreignization - a pair of generalized theories

Before introducing domestication and foreignization, it is essential to distinguish this set of concepts from other translation strategies and theories. Domestication and foreignization are often viewed as an extension and synthesis of other translation approaches, including faithful translation and idiomatic translation, among others (Zhuo, 2022, p.60; Yang, 2010, p.77). Notably, domestication and foreignization go beyond the mere operation of linguistic form and meaning, expanding their horizons to factors such as semantics, culture, and aesthetics, which are often seen as limitations of other translation theories (Wang, F., 2014, p.2424; Alsalmi, 2018, p.30). This study therefore primarily focuses on the application of domestication and foreignization, without delving deeply into other translation theories. The diagram below illustrates their relationship (Newmark, 1988, p.45; Suo, 2015, p.177):

Figure 2.5: The generalized tree map of Domestication & Foreignization





### ***The development and approaches of domestication and foreignization - two magnetic fields***

The terms ‘domestication’ and ‘foreignization’ were coined in the 1990s by the American scholar Lawrence Venuti, who claimed that the translated text can never be entirely synonymous with the foreign text (Venuti, 1995). Venuti introduces these concepts to expand the ideas proposed by the German theorist and philosopher Friedrich Schleiermacher, who argues that there are only two methods of translation: either the translator who brings the reader closer to the author, known as foreignization, or the translator who brings the author closer to the reader, known as domestication.

The concept of ‘strangeness’ can serve as an indicator of whether a translation leans towards domestication or foreignization in terms of language or culture (Gang & Mahadi, 2020, p.877). Domestication, as defined by Venuti (1995, p.6), involves a process where the strangeness of a text is reduced to align with the values of the receiving culture, essentially bringing the author's work into the reader's home culture. This translation strategy, as described by Chouit (2019, p.74), aims to create a seamless and fluent style that eliminates the foreign or unfamiliar elements (strangeness) of the ST, making it more approachable and familiar to readers in the language of the TT. Achieving this involves adhering closely to the linguistic and cultural norms of the target language, namely making it ‘linguistically transparent’, enabling readers to forget they are reading a translation (Ajtony, 2017, p.97).

A foreignization strategy involves exerting an ‘ethnodeviant’ influence on the cultural values of the TT in order to emphasize the linguistic and cultural distinctions found in the ST. Foreignization signifies a type of translation that intentionally challenges the norms and conventions of the TT, while preserving the foreign elements of the ST (Venuti, 1995, p.24). This approach not only allows for deviation from strict adherence to TL linguistic and textual standards but also involves opting for a less fluent and more obscure style, as well as intentionally incorporating references and archaic elements from the foreign culture. The goal is to provide readers with an unfamiliar reading experience and to make the translator's presence apparent by emphasizing the foreign identity of the ST (Shuttleworth & Cowie, 2014, p.59). It is important to note that employing foreignization as a translation strategy does not

automatically result in obscurity. Translators who opt for a foreignization approach aim to broaden the spectrum of translation techniques with the intention of establishing other innovative ways of providing readability that nevertheless retain the meanings of the source text (Chouit, 2019, p.76).

Venuti's 'invisibility' theory, particularly relevant to the domestication strategy, centers around the idea that in this approach, the translator's role should be inconspicuous. When employing domestication, the presentation of the translation is so smooth and aligned with the vocabulary and culture of the TT readers that they do not perceive it as a 'translation'. Instead, it appears as if the work is originally written in the language and cultural context of the target language. Consequently, translators are, in a sense, rendered 'invisible' in this translation process (Venuti, 1995, p.1). Therefore, the translator's visibility, or the presence of 'translation traces', is negatively correlated to the use of foreignization strategy (Venuti, 1995, p.2).

Naturally, it is important to discuss which actions are categorized as domestication and foreignization and under which circumstances these two strategies are applied. As per the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*, the domestication strategy has a historical presence dating back to ancient Rome (Baker & Saldanha, 2009, p.35). In a broad sense, when a translator chooses to embellish the ST with a fresh and highly original metaphor, the results naturally tend to be more in line with concepts familiar in the target culture than those of the source culture. This reflects an adaptation to the preferences and norms of the target culture's readers, through the deliberate use of a fluent, natural-sounding target language style and the substitution of any foreign cultural elements from the ST (Shuttleworth & Cowie, 2014, p.17). In this process, the original metaphors are substituted with more widely recognized ones in the target culture, or are replaced by non-metaphorical explanations, and in some cases, are entirely omitted (Van Poucke & Belikova, 2016, p.351).

Employing domestication in translation also involves avoiding any form of disruption, provocation, or innovation in the tradition of the target language and cultures, as emphasized by Chouit (2019, p.79). It involves several key aspects (Munday, 2016, p.223-224): a) a careful selection of texts that are suitable for this approach; b) a deliberate usage of a fluent and natural-sounding target language style; c) an adaptation of the TT to align with the specific discourse types of the target culture; d) additional explanatory comments or

annotations to assist readers of the TT to understand unfamiliar elements from the ST; e) a removal or transfer of the ST, including archaic terms and units of measurement, in favour of equivalents more familiar to the target culture; f) an overall adjustment of the TT to meet the preconceptions and preferences of the target language.

Hence, theoretically, the domestication strategy is typically employed when dealing with culture-specific vocabulary, such as food names, cultural concepts, geographic names, currency units, poetry, lyrical texts, phrasal verbs, idiomatic expressions, word order, accent, and dialects (Ajtony, 2017, p.102). Usually, more formal texts, such as information for the general public, music, movies, teaching materials, literary works, import and export daily necessities instructions, etc., all use a domestication strategy (Shen & Fu, 2016, p.31). One could argue that any approach employed to enhance the reader's comfort in reading and understanding a translation, or to create a stronger connection between the reader and the ST (Karpínska, 2018, p.136), or just make it easier for readers to understand, denote a domestication strategy. Netflix for example suggests the translation of subtitles aligning the tone and style of the 'original' content in adaptation to that of the 'target' audience and language (Netflix, 2020). Domesticating translation is primarily associated with translating from less widely spoken languages into more widely spoken languages (such as from Korean to English), for the consideration of the large population and the powerful culture of the language of the TT, such as English and the Anglo-American culture (Venuti, 1995, p.17).

The concept of foreignization first emerged in German culture during the classical and Romantic eras, with one of its most prominent proponents being the philosopher and theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher. In his renowned lecture *On the Different Ways of Translation*, he contends that if all translations are identical in their reading and expression, the unique identity of the ST would be obliterated and assimilated into the cultural context of the target language (Schulte & Biguenet, 1992, p.43). In a broad sense, foreignization in translation exhibits the following characteristics (Li, 2016, p.7): a) disregarding the conventions of the target language; b) selecting intentionally obscure literary forms; c) retaining the original modes of expression from the ST.

Unofficial translations tend to employ foreignization techniques more frequently, even if it means disregarding the cultural values of the target culture (Karpínska, 2018, p.136), as

seen in cases like video games and comedies (Perego & Bruti, 2015, p.12). On the other hand, formal translations, like museum information, speeches by political leaders, and scientific articles, also sometimes embrace foreignization strategies (Shen & Fu, 2016, p.31). Taking a domestication approach frequently requires more time and presents a greater challenge for translators, necessitating extensive research, intricate translation strategies, and advanced skills (Yonamine, 2022, p.199). Therefore, in many cases, translators resort to foreignization due to several common challenges within the translation market, including but not limited to tight deadlines, limited budgets, decreasing compensation rates, the presence of low quality assessment standards and poor supervision (Kuo, 2015, p.13).

There is an assumption that foreignization is more likely to be employed in translations from highly esteemed languages, such as English, into lesser-known languages (Ajtony, 2017, p.97). This is because metaphorical expressions from English have become widely disseminated in other languages and cultures through various media channels like literature, film, and the internet, owing to the rapid process of globalization and the UK's colonial history (Van Poucke & Belikova, 2016, p.361). Similarly, in the translation of movie subtitles fanbase forum translations often heavily lean towards foreignization, contrary to the Netflix standard. Fanbased subtitles translation tends to retain foreign markers and the sense of otherness, possibly due to the creative liberties taken by enthusiasts that may not be available to professional subtitlers (Yonamine, 2022, p.206). It is reasonable to speculate that any translation approach aiming to preserve the characteristics of the ST or to challenge readers to step out of their 'comfort zone' can be considered an extension of the foreignization strategy.

### ***Evaluation of domestication and foreignization - a never-ending debate***

Since Venuti introduced the theories of foreignization and domestication, the translation community has been engaged in an ongoing discourse about the merits and drawbacks of these two approaches. The advantages of domestication are easy to see. It brings the translation closer to the reader, enhancing the reader's comprehension of the ST. The resulting translation is more reader-friendly, ensuring the accurate conveyance of information, and often promoting cultural assimilation (Prasetyo & Nugroho, 2013, p.7). On the other hand,

in its attempt to integrate the translation into the target culture, domestication may disregard key foreign cultural elements, and therefore risk diluting the linguistic and sociocultural nuances of the ST (Zhuo, 2022, p.61). It can provide the target-language reader with a self-affirming experience by recognizing their own culture in an unfamiliar context (Venuti, 1995, p.15), yet it can also pose a threat to the cultural and linguistic existence of minority languages (Venuti, 1995, p.145). Furthermore, readers are essentially consuming the translator's interpretation and analysis of the ST, rather than the unmediated ST itself (Prasetyo & Nugroho, 2013, p.7). This approach can be seen as a concession to the preferences of publishers, reviewers, and readers (Gambier, 2016, p.889). It may create an 'illusion of transparency' (Venuti, 1995, p.1) or 'superficial fluency' (Even-Zohar, 1978, p.7) in terms of the linguistic and cultural norms of the target language.

By contrast, through the application of the foreignization strategy, readers can immerse themselves in the 'exotic' cultures of the ST, leading to a unique and enriching reading experience (Li, 2016, p.7). This approach also fosters intercultural learning (Prasetyo & Nugroho, 2013, p.8), offering readers an opportunity to gain insights into different cultural contexts. Furthermore, it can contribute to language evolution by blurring the lines between what is currently considered 'foreignized' (e.g., specific terms and cyberspeak) and what may eventually be integrated into the domestic language (Chouit, 2019, p.79). However, it is worth noting that opinions on the efficacy of foreignization vary. While Venuti (1995, p.15) staunchly supports foreignization as a means to preserve minority languages, his perspective is challenged by Cronin (1998, p.150), who argues that for marginal languages, more fluent translation strategies may offer a progressive path to their survival. Interestingly, in the Western media industry, there exists a practice of intentionally accentuating foreign elements, not aiming to enhance the comprehension of these terms but, rather, to underscore their distinctiveness and amplify the gap that sets apart the West from the rest of the world (Bassnett, 2005, p.127).

Many scholars advocate a balanced approach that combines both domestication and foreignization rather than taking an extreme stance in either direction (Gang & Mahadi, 2020, p.882). This middle ground acknowledges that the translator plays a vital role in mediating between source and target cultures (Pym, 1995, p.170). With a vast vocabulary at their

disposal, translators often employ a range of solutions. This might involve domesticating certain 'foreign' cultural terms in some instances while retaining them in the TT in others (Ajtony, 2017, p.97). Either strategy may be effective in European cultures with equal power relations, but it may not necessarily work in cultures with less or weaker global political influence (Shamma, 2005, p.64). In practice, whether to employ domestication or foreignization should be carefully considered in relation to the specific context in which the translation is produced and received, as well as the function it aims to serve within a particular socio-cultural setting (Chouit, 2019, p.80). This underscores the dynamic and context-dependent nature of translation decisions.

### ***Domestication and foreignization in China - Chinese matters the most***

The conflict between domestication and foreignization in China can be regarded as a reflection of the cultural and political power shift of the Chinese language (Yang, 2010, p.77). Since the 21st century, foreignization has emerged as a concept that is increasingly recognized by Chinese scholars, primarily in the context of translating Chinese as the source language to English as the target language, for several reasons: a) China's growing economic power and global world status empower the language, Chinese, to be accepted and learned by increasing numbers of people around the world (Zhang et al., 2019, p.9); b) many traditional Chinese cultural terms are impossible to translate into English and more and more Chinese terms have been accepted and recognized (Zhao, 2019, p.122); c) the development of the Internet allows all information to be discovered, potentially lowering the need for over-domestication (Guo, 2016, p.125; Lv & Guo, 2022, p.30); d) the vast Chinese-speaking population is dispersed globally, which reduces the demand for domestication in translation (Carver, 2014, p.275; Zhao, 2019, p.155); e) pronunciation of Chinese can be referred to in Pinyin (a systematic way to represent the pronunciation of Chinese characters using the familiar Latin alphabet), similar to many of the world's alphabet-based languages. With explanation, it is as easy as learning a new word from their own languages for such readers (Chung, 2002, p.159).

In China generally, domestication is commonly employed when the TT (target text) is Chinese. This preference primarily arises from the unique linguistic context of China, where

Chinese is the predominant language, unlike Europe or other countries with greater language diversity due to geographical proximity of other linguistic zones (Zhao, 2019, p.52). Additionally, the educational level of a significant portion of the population is not very high, making it challenging for them to accept or understand translations that deviate too much from the familiar (Jiang & Guo, 2018, p.74; Xu, 2002, p.36). However, when the TT is in English, the choice of translation strategy varies depending on the specific circumstances (Shi, 2014, p.765). For instance, there are translation programs or cultural organizations supported by the Chinese local or central government, aiming to disseminate Chinese language, culture, and ideology to the world (such as the Confucius Institute). These projects, seeking to exert some form of influence beyond their cultural confines, namely soft power (Valdeón, 2020b p.30), would employ a foreignization strategy in a way that preserves China's cultural characteristics and language customs.

The Domestication and Foreignization theory is one of the key translation theories discussed and applied in translation studies. the IS is based on journalism and sports. the following section, will turn to a more detailed literature review pertinent to the IS's involvement in news translation

### **2.4.3 News translation - filtering and adaptation**

News translation, or journalism translation, has drawn significant attention from both translation and journalism scholars. The historical application of translation played a pivotal role in the emergence of journalism in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and this trend has continued (Valdeón, 2020a, p.1646), yet, translation of the news receded into the background during the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Zanettin, 2021, p.47). However, translation's invisibility in the 19<sup>th</sup> century does not signify its separation from news production. Rather, translation has come to be regarded as a necessary part of the process of news production in that period (Valdeón, 2023, p.253; Bielsa & Bassnett, 2009, p.81). In recent years, news translation, or 'translation in journalism', has gained attention from communication scholars driven by the forces of globalization and the growing prominence of English in an increasingly interconnected world (Valdeón, 2020a, p.1651). While the Internet has expanded access to information and broadened the reach of

news dissemination, it does not inherently guarantee higher quality translation or improved news production (Bassnett, 2005, p.123). Researchers have increasingly examined news translation through a communication lens, amplifying the role of translators in this process. It is now widely accepted that there is no single 'right' way to articulate translation (Valdeón, 2020a, p.1645). In the context of journalistic translation, this recognition implies that adaptation, editing, and rewriting are integral components of the translation process (Bassnett, 2005, p.120).

Translation in news is part of a wider, more complex process that does not necessarily prioritize translation itself. Valdeón (2023) highlights that, for journalists, translation is a secondary activity to writing the source text (ST) (p.249), exerting a significant influence on news production in both pre-writing and writing stages. This impact is observed in the selection of news material and the methods chosen for delivering it to readers (p.253), involving tasks like translating pieces from other languages, summarizing, expanding, and omitting content (p.247). These comprehensive adaptations are frequently guided by various organizations engaged in news collection and publishing, such as media outlets, the audience, news agencies (which may be government-controlled, especially in non-Western democracies), and a spectrum of political organizations, ranging from government departments to non-governmental organizations (Palmer, 2009, p.187; Perrin, 2012, p.141). Public and private institutions employ translation to influence target audiences in a range of contexts, even when communication is not their primary role (Valdeón, 2020b, p.34). Translation therefore takes place within institutions influenced by individual, collective and social factors that indirectly shape the final text, such as stylistic, formatting, and other factors (Bassnett, 2005, p.125). In news production, translation can manifest itself in many ways, often unconsciously manipulated by the translators (Valdeón, 2020b, p.28). In summary, news translation, as defined by Scammell (2020, p.301), entails the transformation of journalistic articles, from one or more ST into a TT, which can involve omissions, additions, and adaptations. The texts encompass a wide range of content, including news articles, editorials, interviews, and more. They are managed with careful consideration of various factors such as economic, politics, social formation, and institutional contexts, as well as the expectations and requirements of the target readership.



The aforementioned theories reveal the unique context of news translation from a news writing perspective, presenting two scenarios. Firstly, when the translator is also the journalist, (Livingston et al., 2005, p.37), seamlessly handling both roles, translation becomes intertwined with gatekeeping, involving the filtration of information, rather than being solely an interlinguistic and intercultural endeavor. Secondly, in cases where the translator and journalist are distinct individuals, the translator essentially reworks the journalist's work. (Valdeón, 2020a, p.1655). However, it is undeniable that translators play a huge role in processing information. Here, it is worth mentioning the subjectivity of the translator, which involves the translator's intentions, goals, and ways of working during the translation process (Fu, 2019, p.51). This underscores the significant role that translators play, as highlighted in the literature discussed earlier. For journalistic translators, subjectivity starts as 'gatekeeping', a process of screening information and only passing on items that will help others share their views (Baran & Davis, 2021, p.135). This moment can also be interpreted as the commencement of pre-decoding for intended audience. The translator's subjectivity makes it possible to clarify ambiguities and highlight the core information, as if having a conversation with the ST writer (Cheng, 2011, p.216). Translators often tend to believe that the parts of the ST they choose to emphasize are representative of the primary message that the ST writer may have failed to convey adequately, whether due to ignorance or ineptitude. From the translator's perspective, this isn't a simplification or reduction of the ST, but a form of clarification (Robinson, 1991, p.154). The next subsection will shift towards examining gatekeeping behavior and its broader utilization in the realm of news translation.

### ***Gatekeeping – a journalistic notion applied to news translation***

In the field of communication studies, David White (1950) is the pioneer in examining the role of editors in the screening of news stories, emphasizing that gatekeeping is a highly subjective behaviour influenced by the editor's personal experiences, attitudes, and expectations regarding news production (p.390). Over time, gatekeeping has evolved into a common theory within journalism studies. It is then defined as the process of selecting and shaping fragments of information into a set of messages that reach the audience (Shoemaker

& Vos, 2009, p.1). Gatekeeping has been conceptualized as both a normative role in journalism and as a theoretical framework (Perreault, 2022, p.1). It can serve as a means of determining what qualifies as news, or what eventually becomes newsworthy (Livingston et al., 2005, p.39), or be viewed as a model that guides the process of news selection (Tandoc, 2018, p.239), including preference, writing, editing, positioning, scheduling, and repeating information (Shoemaker et al., 2009, p.73). Importantly, gatekeeping not only shapes public opinions but also defines the relevance of the information itself. Consequently, the term 'gatekeeper' indicates all those decision-makers involved in the news production process, including foreign correspondents, editors, news service editors, and copy editors (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009, p.18).

The enduring relevance of gatekeeping theory can be attributed, in part, to its fundamental concern with explaining the uneven availability of information. It aims to understand the factors that either impede or facilitate the flow of information (Perreault, 2022, p.2). The gatekeeping process operates across five distinct levels: a) The individual level, which closely relates to individual gatekeepers' access to news sources and their personal preferences (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009, p.31); b) The communication routines level, which pertains to the established journalistic practices and judgments in terms of reaching out to readers and maintaining control over news quality. It encompasses criteria for determining newsworthiness, including aspects like frequency, threshold, unambiguity, meaningfulness, consonance, and unexpectedness (Galtung & Ruge, 1965, p.70). In other words, it concerns the principles that guide the process of selecting which information can reach the target audience; c) The organizational level, which indicates the diversity of media outlets that play a significant role. Each media outlet generates news content based on its position within the media industry, its size, its primary news coverage areas, and the specific audiences it caters to (Deiuliis, 2015, p.3; Shoemaker & Vos, 2009, p.63); d) The social institution level: this refers to the influence of the broader political and social environment. News outlets become tools for shaping public opinions, so gatekeeping automatically adapts to the prevailing expectations and dynamics of the societal context at the time (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009, p.77); e) The social system level, which delves into the more abstract and overarching forces of culture, ideology, and economics that impact gatekeeping (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009, p.98).

Gatekeeping theory offers a holistic framework for comprehending the selection, shaping, and dissemination of information within intricate news production settings, and opens up avenues for exploring how translation engages with this process.

In journalism studies, John McNelly (1959, p.23) is among the first to acknowledge the role of translation within the gatekeeping process. He notes that translation, along with other factors like addressing errors, bias, selection, and processing, is an essential step in ensuring that information reaches its intended audience. As a result, translation is not solely about managing language challenges, employing strategies, seeking solutions, or adjusting intonations. Instead, it should be regarded as a 'gate' that precedes the actual act of translation itself (Valdeón, 2023, p.252; Van Doorslaer, 2012, p.1056). Valdeón (2020b, p.32; 2023, p.253) argues that in contemporary news production, translation has become an intentional narrative style that integrates information from various linguistic backgrounds and diverse sources. In the context of news production, translation serves two primary functions. Firstly, it acts as a filter that allows journalists or translators (and the organizations they represent) to deliberate on what should or should not be published. Secondly, translation aids in selecting the segments of the ST that require adaptation, addition, or omission. This notion finds support in Kalantari (2022, p.1422), who suggests that translation not only functions as a gate for selecting information that enters the media channel, but also operates differently in various media contexts and collaborates with other gatekeeping mechanisms that represent the various influences within journalistic production.

In news production, the gatekeeping role of translators is theoretically similar to that of journalists. When it comes to the selecting stage, it is suggested that news values, and the political standards of the TT reader are the priority, partly because of the speed of media consumption and availability of competition on the internet (Orengo, 2005, p.168). However, this idea is challenged by Valdeón (2023, p.246), who suggests that translated news, especially when they aim to convey the local opinions to a global audience, may not always be fast or simultaneous. This phenomena is seen both in the West and the East. Valdeón (2022a, p.130) demonstrates that in Spain, the alignment of local media with the central government's ideology plays a role in deciding what to translate for global audiences. Similarly, Pan (2014, p.557) concludes that in China, the primary gatekeeping decision in

translation revolves around the standards and interests of domestic audiences. Cheng (2011) explains how translation functions as gatekeeping in the word processing phase by using techniques such as: a) abridgment (p.224) (condensing texts while retaining the core ideas of the ST); b) de-dramatization (p.225) (reducing the boundary between factual and fictional narratives, a common feature found in Western media); c) assimilation (p.225) (presenting the TT in a style that minimizes the foreignness of the ST, akin to domestication, but with additional elements to make it more understandable and engaging for the TT readers).

In the realm of news translation, there has not been extensive discussion of domestication and foreignization. However, when assessing these perspectives regarding the source text (ST) and target text (TT), scholars have different views. Some scholars value the readability in the TT, aligning with domestication, such as Orengo (2005, p.185). In contrast, Valdeón (2020a, 2023) appears to lean towards favoring foreignization and respecting the ST. Li's (2016, p.8) theory may fall somewhere in between but tends towards domestication, as he views the ultimate goal of the final translation presentation as being to 'minimize the foreignness of the ST'. It is important to note that in the IS office of MSEs in China, there are distinct roles for translators, journalists, editors, and proofreading editors, each with their own responsibilities (see section 2.3.2).

Gatekeeping in China serves not only to sift through sensitive information that could potentially have adverse effects on the public (Guo, 2016, p.124), but also to preserve or promote positive information with the aim of fostering social harmony and unity (Kaplan, 2018, p.13). The evolution of media development in China can be summarized in two phases: a) prior to 1978, the media was entirely under party control and state ownership, and primarily focused on promoting ideology and government-friendly content; b) from 1978 onwards, media outlets were permitted in the market, with the state transitioning from full ownership to control or support, while seeking profitability within government regulations (Kaplan, 2018, p.11). Editors and journalists routinely scrutinize their reports for accuracy, fairness, sensitive content, and the promotion and safeguarding of specific interests (Yu, 2011, p.381). Therefore, the discussion of sensitive information and interest protection will be addressed in the subsequent paragraph.

Sensitive information pertains to political or ideological aspects that often lead to

disputes among involved parties, encompassing terms and phrases with negative implications related to news events or the parties involved (Pan, 2014, p.554). Typically, it includes subjects such as religion, anarchism, extreme ideologies, sexuality, domestic inequality, ethnic conflicts, protests, social movements, perceived misconduct, separatist organizations and terrorist groups, among others (Zhang et al., 2019, p.58). Given that China operates as a one-party state, the consideration of interest protection primarily revolves around national and governmental interests. These interests include but are not limited to safeguarding national security and territorial integrity, preserving government order, and upholding the authority of the ruling party (Zhang et al., 2019, p.60). Generally, decisions about the inclusion or exclusion of such information are made by chief editors (Chen et al., 2013, p.88). However, one can argue that the classification of this type of information as sensitive or worthy of discussion is not exclusive to China and could be applicable to any country.

The gatekeeping mechanism in Chinese media is a blend of professional ethics, political influences, and market demands, and it has been effectively incorporated into the entire news production process—prior to, during, and after reporting (Yu, 2011, p.381). This integration has made the media an integral component of the state apparatus, meaning a spokesman of the central government (Kaplan, 2018, p.12). Interestingly, the Chinese public is aware of the gatekeeping process, and while they largely accept it with equanimity, they also engage in playful mockery of it (Yu, 2011, p.389). This acceptance and even humor regarding the gatekeeping process might explain why the term is rarely used within Chinese journalism. Relying solely on gatekeeping theory to analyze the behaviours of translators and proofreading editors would constitute an incomplete approach. Therefore, the subsequent subsection will discuss a concept closely related to this study - transediting.

### ***Transediting - An approach favoured by Chinese media***

Karen Stetting is credited with introducing the term transediting to the field of news translation. According to Stetting's definition, transediting encompasses the diverse processes required to transform ST into a TT in a different language, involving three key aspects: adapting the translation to the standard of efficiency in expression in the target language; aligning it with the intended function of the translated text; and ensuring it conforms to the

conventions of the target culture (Stetting, 1989, p.377). The definition of transediting overlaps a little with gatekeeping theory in that it also describes making adaptations in the translation process. Other scholars have applied the term to describe the extensive rewriting techniques that translators use to enhance the ST significantly (Chesterman, 2016, p.114), or to create news content tailored to satisfy the needs and preferences of the TT audience, excluding the translation process which is a distinct form of linguistic transformation requiring its own specialized adjustments (Valdeón, 2023, p.248). It has been observed that within news organizations, transediting is often regarded as a standardized translational approach, a widely practiced process in which both the translator and the act of translation remain entirely inconspicuous (Bielsa & Bassnett, 2009, p.91), an essential component of the news production (Valdeón, 2023, p.253).

However, transediting has been challenged by scholars over the years, debating its difference from gatekeeping and questioning its necessity. Baumann et al. (2011, p.137) argues that the key contrast between gatekeeping and transediting lies in the fact that gatekeeping encompasses the methods, skills, and potentially adjustments involved in language-to-language transformations, whereas transediting involves implicit, frequently unspoken, changes in discursive intonations and revolves around the simultaneous execution of both translation and editing processes. It can be argued that this conclusion suggests that gatekeeping primarily emphasizes the selection stage, where news sources may be overlooked, and information may be omitted or emphasized to promote or avoid specific ideas in the news. By contrast, transediting places greater emphasis on the editing process, encompassing adaptation, selection, and adjustments to sentence structure and vocabulary to underscore the theme, acknowledging the translator's creative role and the textual transformation of the ST (Matsushita, 2019, p.31).

There are also scholars who question transediting because this concept overlooks the reality that translation in journalism already extends beyond a simple word-for-word transformation. It is, in fact, a multifaceted process that encompasses both textual and sociocultural dimensions, demanding various forms of transformation (as argued above). Moreover, the ever-increasing influence of social media and internet platforms further complicates the intricacies of this process (Schäffner, 2012, p.881). This idea is supported by

Valdeón (2023, p.249) who states that among journalism scholars, the concept of 'transediting' is an act of making additional modifications to previous translation, and in practice, all translations necessitate such adaptations, although the extent of these adjustments may vary depending on the specific type of text (p.249), and this process would be more useful and applicable in the study of news translation (p.250). Hence, it can be argued that it would be quite challenging to solely focus on the concept of transediting, differentiate it from gatekeeping, and effectively implement this theory in practice (Bielsa, 2007, p.141).

Nevertheless, it is important to note that in China, the concept of transediting, emphasizing the fusion of editing and translation, with a focus on the journalism framework influenced by the translation process, is popular in translation and journalism studies. In the realm of social and cultural practices, the emergence of transediting is an inevitable outcome of media evolution. Transediting primarily relies on the translator's creative writing and editing skills, involving the collection and synthesis of information from various sources (Chang & Yang, 2015, p.17). The final output is typically more accessible and reader-friendly for the domestic audience compared to traditional translation (Chang & Yang, 2015, p.17). This perspective suggests that while the media may perceive translation as a relatively straightforward task, many journalism scholars have noted that the proficiency in handling Chinese as a target language reflects the skill and expertise of a translator, and a high-quality translation from English to Chinese should provide readers with a feeling of immediacy, much like reading in their native language, free from any readability issues (Chen et al., 2013, p.188; Zhao, 2019, p.77; Jiang & Guo, 2018, p.75).

Chinese scholars define the aims of transediting differently. In Chen's view (2009, p.203), transediting aims to deliver a text that a) meets the demands of conciseness and time sensitivity; b) adapts the ST to align with the journalistic standards of the target language; c) modifies the news perspectives. Therefore, Chen (2009, p.204) argues repeatedly that in news transediting, the paramount focus is not on faithfulness (reaching equivalence between the ST and the TT), but on adaptation (the skills of rewriting achieved through diverse forms of textual manipulation), which has the same status as gatekeeping, and together they constitute transediting. This indicates that transediting is not seen as a theory, but rather, as a general policy that is tacitly used to guide the entire news translation process, and even determines

what content gatekeeping should filter (Chen, 2009, p.205; Zhao, 2019, p.110).

The purpose of transediting, as in the context of Chinese journalism therefore encompasses several key objectives: a) conveying socio-cultural or socio-political ideologies that news organizations believe their readers desire (Reah, 2002, p.35); b) condensing the article's information to present the essential content within the confines of limited space, whether in a newspaper or on a web page (Zhao, 2019, p.79); c) aligning with China's news policy, regulations, mainstream values, and government stance (Pan, 2014, p.554); d) avoiding sensitive information or inflammatory comments by either replacing or omitting them from the text (Zhao, 2019, p.91); e) evaluating and revising any biases present in Western coverage of China (Pan, 2014, p.554; Chang & Yang, 2015, p.19); f) using more accurate and professional expressions to avoid redundancy, duplication, omissions and other ambiguities (Zhao, 2019, p.82).

One can therefore argue that in China, the concept of transediting has taken on a broader meaning. It represents a translation strategy rooted in gatekeeping, leaning more towards domestication, and placing significant emphasis on the idea of 'localization' in the TT as an aesthetic pursuit. By contrast, traditional translation in Chinese news organizations adheres to the conventional sense of translation, where fidelity and literal translation are upheld as fundamental requirements (Pan, 2014, p.555).

While the concept of transediting may not have garnered substantial recognition or ongoing research from international scholars, it is a term commonly acknowledged and employed in China. Translation scholars, especially those focusing on news translation, recognize and use this term (such as Chen, 2013; Jiang, 2014; Lv & Guo, 2023; Zhao, 2019). It is important to address a key point to dispel any potential confusion: that is news translation in China remains deeply rooted in stringent information control and censorship, with a strong emphasis on the editing process. Valdeón (2023, p.249) notes that all news inherently undergoes a process of 'adaptation'. However, in China, the approach differs from that in many news agencies, where 'journalists undertake the translation work themselves'. In China's larger news agencies, the task is entrusted to professional translators and proofreading editors (Pan, 2014, p.555). When these professionals execute their respective roles, the concept of transediting can be viewed as a form of double gatekeeping.



The analysis of this section yields valuable theoretical insights for this study. Firstly, conventional news translation research frames translation as a practical act that blends journalism theories with the analysis of translation practices. Consequently, this research on the practices of translators and proofreading editors should adopt a comprehensive framework rooted in MSE, journalism, and translation. Secondly, within the context of news production, translation serves a dual role: acting as ‘gatekeeper’ in the selection of the ST from journalism approaches and as ‘translator’ when moving from the ST to the TT based on translation approaches. This study will probe the translator's role in these two stages, exploring how they execute these functions, particularly when cognizant of the necessity of gatekeeping. Thirdly, recognizing that all news undergoes editing and processing, it becomes worthwhile to find out how information from the IS office, or ‘raw news’, is treated and modified. Guided by the theory proposed by Yu (2011), it is imperative to uncover how translators and proofreading editors in the IS aim to achieve faithfulness, avoid sensitive information, and balance various interests. Lastly, the popularity of transediting theory in China can be attributed to the clear division of labour in newsrooms. Therefore, when the IS office has a well-defined division of responsibilities, it becomes crucial to consider the aspects that proofreading editors need to take into account in their work. These insights collectively provide a robust theoretical foundation for the forthcoming investigation into the practices of translators and proofreading editors in the IS office in MSEs in China.

#### **2.4.4. Translation of Sports News - A conjunction of news, translation and sports**

The emergence of sports translation is a direct outcome of the worldwide proliferation of sports as a cultural phenomenon and a booming industry (Zhao, 2019, p.11). Its fundamental purpose is to facilitate the conversion and transmission of sports information across diverse cultures. Sports translation helps convert symbols and regenerate meaning in cross-cultural communication. Translation theories in sports goes beyond the selection of domestication and foreignization. It also involves offering frameworks in defining, categorizing and comprehending sports texts, as well as determining precise translation strategies and methods (Yuan, 2019, p.77). This subsection will briefly discuss the notion and features of sports

translation and how it contributes to the complexity of the translation of sports news.

### ***Sports Translation - A highly professional business under the veil of entertainment***

Sports English, or Applied English in Sports, is a highly versatile applied language, showcasing diversity in expressions across various sports, and it functions as a structured academic language within the framework of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in applied linguistics, complete with a comprehensive lexicon of professional terminology (Yang, 2015, p.65). One notable example of this diversity is the use of entirely different English words to convey the same concept in Chinese translation across different sports. For instance, the surface where a competition occurs can be referred to as a 'court' in basketball, a 'field' in football, or a 'rink' in figure skating. Therefore, sports translation typically involves the task of conveying terms, rules, information about athletes, and all aspects related to a sporting event from one language to another (Zhao, 2019, p.27). Sports translation encompasses a wide range of functions, including: a) providing translation services for individuals working in the sports industry; b) handling all translation needs related to sports competitions, both incoming and outgoing; c) offering interpretation and analysis of sports terminology for individuals who require a deeper understanding of the field (Uyanik, 2017, p.101). Based on content, there are four categories of translation in sports: a) sports terms, such as Ace (a direct serve score in tennis); b) individual sports, such as boxing or triathlon; c) names of sports events and organization, such as the IOC (International Olympic Committee); d) sports technical actions, such as spike (smash in volleyball) (Kowalikowa, 2009, p.63) with many abbreviations and compound words (Luo, 2012, p.105). Yang underscores the challenges inherent in sports translation, while Huo and Yuan (2022, p.60) point out that due to the inherently entertaining nature of sports, sports translation also requires a character that frequently incorporates well-known phrases and expressions from other domains to create a vivid atmosphere and get closer to the audience. According to their views, it could be predicted that there are primarily two types of texts in sports translation:

- a) Professional texts related to sports competitions, including training manuals, rules, refereeing methods, competitive sports information, etc. These texts typically rely

on specialized knowledge, terminology, and idioms, resembling texts in fields like scientific translation and medical translation, and fall within the realm of ESP;

b) Texts outside the realm of competitions, such as news interviews, reports, broadcast commentaries, public relations documents, etc. These texts often feature a blend of specialized terminology and more common language, intended for general public consumption.

Jiang and Guo (2018, p.75) suggest that the standard for translating the latter type of text should be ‘plain text with a smooth flow and the simplest vocabulary with a sports flavour’. These texts largely approach ‘sports’ as a phenomenon, and they do not demand an extensive level of sports expertise. Instead, they align more with the characteristics of general literary texts. In such cases, sports knowledge serves as a supplementary tool rather than a primary requirement for effective translation (Huo & Yuan, 2022, p.61). In essence, the audience of the translation works are required to possess not only a command of the specialized terminology within different sports but also the ability to communicate clearly, while maintaining a sense of professionalism (Jiang, 2014, p.15; Zhao, 2019, p.27)

Naturally, it is worth discussing the term ESP (English for Specific Purposes), sometimes called LSP (Language for Specific Purposes), which is an amalgamation of translation and specialized communication. ESP is characterized by: a) externalizing specialized knowledge systems and cognitive processes; b) the evaluation and selection of information from a database; c) a primary objective of conveying this information in another language; and d) consideration of the cultural context of the TT (Sandrini, 2006, p.109–110). Historically, ESP research has predominantly been driven by individual contributions and focused on subjects such as medicine, technology, law, and economics, and limited research has been undertaken in the professional fields that encompass elements of entertainment, such as sports, music, and art (Taylor, 2006, p.11).

For example, E-sports, a form of sports where electronic systems play a central role in facilitating the sport through human-computer interfaces (Hamari & Sjöblom 2017, p.213), remains a new industry where there is no universally recognized vocabulary yet. It is worth mentioning that E-sports is steadily establishing its presence within the sports industry. An important milestone in this development was the inclusion of E-sports in the 2023 Asian

Games, where it was first televised as part of a MSE, featuring a total of 8 sports (Thompson, 2023). It can be argued that E-sport holds the potential to make a significant contribution to the field of ESP research within the sports industry.

There are other factors that hinder the development of sports translation in China, such as a) insufficient language skills and sense of responsibility; b) uneven quality of reference materials (data base); c) short sports translation history (Liu, G., 2022, p.161); d) cultural differences behind the languages (Zhao, 2019, p.88; Liu, G., 2022, p.161); e) a serious shortage of sports translation talent due to loopholes in talent training programs in colleges and universities (Zhang et al., 2019, p.144); f) treating sports as entertainment, leading to poor quality control of sports information (Chen et al., 2013, p.101); g) translators' insufficient multilingual skills (Boynukara, 2017, p.3).

### ***Translation of Sports News - A notable contrast in application between China and the West***

Some scholars have noted that in the West, owing to the maturity of the sports industry, sports media often publish both easy-to-read articles for the general public and highly specialized reports related to ESP sports (Zhang et al., 2019, p.77; Huo & Yuan, 2022, p.61). In China, the translation of sports news predominantly falls into the first category. Here, sports news tends to serve as informational content in the real world (Luo, 2012, p.105). There are no media in China that specialize in the independent sports industry. In most cases, there is a 'sports channel' affiliated with a large news agency (Chen et al., 2013, p.21; Zhang et al., 2019, p.11). Therefore, the translation of sports news shows uneven quality due to uneven staffing and qualifications between broadcasters (Jiang & Guo, 2018, p.74).

Regarding the translation of sports English, Chinese and Western scholars have different opinions. In the West, requests for the translation of sports news often align with the writing of sports news. In sports news, the language stands apart from others in a form full of creativity, frequently incorporating wordplay and rhythms, giving rise to a high level of aesthetic language. Given this distinctive linguistic richness, it becomes essential to transfer these characteristics into the TT to maintain both functionality and the desired impact (Uyanik, 2017, p.111-112). This notion is supported by Chinese scholars Luo (2012, p.105) and Liu, G.

(2022, p.156), who argue that sports news should be concise, vivid, and full of a sense of spectacle. However, the idea is disputed by Chinese scholars Zhang et al. (2015, p.117), who suggest that this strategy contradicts Chinese news norms and falls under the category of foreignization. In other words, they argue that there should be a greater emphasis on enhancing the entertainment and recreational aspects of sports news, which only the domestication strategy can achieve. Uyanik (2017, p.104) also suggests that borrowing (using similar words or expressions from the TT) and calque (borrowing an expression from another language and translating each of its elements literally) are two of the most straightforward strategies for addressing the semantic gap in the TT. These approaches have support from a number of Chinese scholars (Ouyang, 2015, p.134; Zhao, 2019, p.133; Lv & Guo, 2022, p.31). Chen and MacDonald (2020) perceive sports news as being in alignment with the intrinsic nature of sports, which is to be a part of a broader category of feel-good events, such as national celebrations, to evoke positive, uplifting, and generally pleasant emotions. Consequently, they argue that the translation of sports news should employ more vivid and emotionally charged vocabulary. Not surprisingly, this strategy raises questions. Some Chinese scholars highlight that translators often make ‘superfluous’ translation errors when faced with emotionally charged words in the ST, reflecting their struggle to find more suitable vocabulary and leading to the introduction of adverbs in the TT simply to adhere to the ST. This tendency results in a TT that becomes overly long and unwieldy (Jiang & Guo, 2018, p.76; Zhang et al., 2015, p.116). Zhao (2019, p.155) notes that Western sports news commonly use representative animals, such as pandas for China and kangaroos for Australia, to symbolize team events. However, in China, this practice is seen as undermining the seriousness of the news and is typically not employed. Through a comparison of how American and Chinese media cover and translate sports news, Cheng (2011, p.218) suggests that American media tend to employ more direct and uncomplicated headlines and narratives. In contrast, Chinese media prefers to use wordplay in headlines while keeping the narratives plain. Additionally, Chinese media often uses terms like ‘us’ and ‘we’ to indicate Chinese athletes. This division of ‘us vs. them’ is a prevalent term mass media use to typically portray athletes from the home country as part of the in-group to get closer to the readers (Billings et al., 2011, p.252).

In China, the literature suggests that the translation of sports news generally leans more towards domestication and revolves around accuracy and conciseness, with the incorporation of suitable colloquial elements to enhance reader engagement and interest, while retaining the serious tone of the news (Ouyang, 2015; Liu, G., 2022; Luo, 2012; Zhao, 2019; Lv & Guo, 2022). However, practical testing of these ideas remains limited. Translation and communication scholars often study sports from their respective perspectives, with some focusing on literal translations and others on sports news analysis. These limited viewpoints may result in opinions and insights that lack a comprehensive understanding of the translation of sports news.

This study, after reviewing the literature, reveals several key insights regarding sports translation. Firstly, sports translation spans both the professional ESP category and the more informal, accessible English used by the general public, resulting in varying levels of complexity. However, as previous studies suggest, the sports news/information that the IS office collect, translate and publish during the MSEs is mainly the informal one, with only Lv and Guo (2022) indicating the ESP feature in it. Secondly, the field of sports translation provides translators with significant room for creativity and selectivity due to the diverse difficulty levels involved. This study not only extends its relevance to translators but also sheds valuable light on the work of proofreading editors, an aspect not previously explored. Furthermore, sports news translation presents a distinctive challenge, requiring a delicate balance between the entertainment aspects of sports and the seriousness of news reporting. The varying perspectives of Chinese and foreign scholars on the practicalities of sports news translation highlight the necessity of considering news, translation, and sports holistically. The translation work conducted within the IS of MSEs in China, as investigated in this study, serves as a valuable reference point in addressing these multifaceted challenges.

## **2.5 Chapter Conclusion**

This chapter primarily served to introduce the existing literature relevant to the study. It began by reviewing research conducted in the MSEs, the IS, news translation, sports

translation, and subsequently examined their corresponding research within the Chinese context.

Section 2.2 demonstrated the significant importance of hosting MSEs in China, particularly since the Beijing 2008 Olympics, and underscored how China utilized such events to achieve domestic and international political and economic objectives through the long-term 'JuGuo TiZhi' (举国体制) sports policy.

In Section 2.3, the developmental trajectory of the IS highlighted its crucial intermediary role between the IOC and the media. With China establishing an additional translation, the IS office potentially assumed a more influential position in controlling the dissemination of information to the public, serving the interests of the IOC, host city, or organizing committee. This set the stage for a deeper exploration of translation practices within the IS in China.

Section 2.4 discussed key translation theories across various disciplines such as sports, journalism, communication, and their adaptation in the Chinese context. This review underscored the necessity of investigating translation practices within the IS. These literature collectively identified a research gap, particularly in examining translation within the backdrop of MSEs, news, journalism, and sports. Furthermore, given that translation within the IS was unique to China, it was imperative to explore its application and its connections with China's sports and news policies.

After introducing the literature related to MSEs, sports journalism, and translation in China, this study centered on the research gap that existed within the translation approaches and theories applied by translators and proofreading editors in the IS work in MSEs in China.

Firstly, the pivotal role of translators as intermediaries, serving to bridge the gap between the ST and the TT. The significance of the translators' role was highlighted, as their comprehension of the ST and the translation strategies they employed significantly shaped the presentation of the TT. This clarified the roles of translators and proofreading editors in the context of the IS office.

Secondly, the choice between domestication and foreignization was intricately linked to the linguistic and cultural strengths of both the ST and the TT. Moreover, in the context of news translation and sports translation, domestication and foreignization strategies were linked with gatekeeping, transediting, and the presentation of a sports report, sometimes in

consideration of the readers. The decision to adopt either method should have factored in the relative dominance of each factor, prompting a necessary discussion on the approaches applied by translators and proofreading editors in the IS in MSEs in China and the underlying reasons for such choices.

Thirdly, it emphasized that even when a translation retained some foreignized elements from the ST, the explanations or expansions provided could still fall under the domestication strategy. This phenomenon was commonly seen in the realm of sports translation. Therefore, the introduction of a new term by translators could be debatably seen as a blend of various strategies, highlighting the nuanced decisions made in the IS office.

Fourthly, while gatekeeping and transediting were perceived differently among scholars in China and the West, the practice of information screening was widely acknowledged albeit with varying standards. The debate often centered around whether an additional layer of information editing in the translation process fell under gatekeeping. Hence, it was worth examining the role of gatekeeping in the IS office, particularly considering that translations underwent scrutiny from both translators and proofreading editors.

Lastly, the dynamic nature of foreignization was acknowledged, suggesting that foreignized elements might gradually be accepted by TT readers over time, losing their foreignized characteristics. This insight raised the question of whether there existed a vague line in determining the necessity of introducing ‘strangeness’ from the ST, with the opinions of translators and proofreading editors potentially clarifying where this line was drawn.

## **2.6 Research aims, objectives and questions**

The aim of this research is to discover the translation principles, motivations and behaviours applied in the IS in MSEs in China.

The objectives of this research are:

- a) to discover the translation rules that guide the IS work, and the translation approaches applied;
- b) to identify translators’ and proofreading editors’ roles in the IS;
- c) to analyze translation approaches in the sports journalism context of the IS;



d) to reveal gatekeeping practices including the approaches and the reasons in the IS in MSEs in China.

The research questions are as follows:

a) Translation Rules and Theories: What translation strategies do translators and proofreading editors adopt in the IS work ?

b) Domestication vs. Foreignization: Given the time constraints in the IS office and the sports terms encountered in the translation, how do translators navigate the balance between adapting content to suit the target audience (domestication) and preserving the authenticity of the source material (foreignization)? Are there any strategies that enable the IS team to deliver their work effectively?

c) Gatekeeping in Translation: How does the IS team manage sensitive or challenging information in translation practice, and what are the underlying reasons and references guiding their approach?

The upcoming chapter will discuss the methodology of this research.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter delineates a qualitative methodology crafted to enable a clear and responsive investigation into the translation approaches utilized within the IS office of MSEs in China. Its aim is to explicate the reasoning behind the methodological choices made for this research endeavor, commencing from research philosophy and approaches, to sampling techniques and thematic analysis. Additionally, it illustrates how data were collected and analyzed. The chapter delves into the theoretical underpinnings of the study, addresses the dual role of the researcher in translation studies, discusses the validity of data analysis, explores ethical considerations, and acknowledges the limitations of the study.

### **3.2 Research Philosophy**

A research paradigm serves as a researcher's guiding worldview, shaping the research process with philosophical foundations and scientific directives (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006, p.1), in consideration of the nature of the research, data, and supporting evidence (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017, p.26). It encompasses ontology (perspectives on the nature of reality), epistemology (ways of knowing reality), methodology (general research strategies), and methods (data collection and analysis) (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020, p.40). In academic research, three widely accepted paradigms are positivism, interpretivism, and critical inquiry/reflection, with positivism and interpretivism dominating social research (Ma & Ma, 2022, p.10).

Positivism finds widespread application in experiments, investigations, and quantitative research, positing that knowledge exists independently of the researcher's conceptual understanding (Ryan, 2018, p.45). It emphasizes the exclusion of words, abstractions, and generalized ideas, valuing only phenomena, measurable entities, and facts (Krauss, 2005, p.761). In terms of ontology and epistemology, positivism asserts that reality is objective, observable, and measurable. Consequently, research aims to unveil this reality, employing

methods designed to minimize the researcher's influence, as seen in the use of questionnaires, social surveys, and official statistics (Park et al., 2019, p.691). In contrast, interpretivism, also known as anti-positivism, contends that objectivity is unattainable. This paradigm recognizes the complexity and immeasurability of human opinions, giving precedence to the participants' perspectives. Its ontology and epistemology propose a subjective and socially constructed reality (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020, p.42). Discovery of these realities occurs through interactions among participants and researchers (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017, p.33), necessitating methods like interviews, focus groups, text messages, and videotapes (Pulla & Carter, 2018, p.11).

This study adopts qualitative research that aims to discover the translation theories and principles applied in the IS in MSEs in China. It will adopt the interpretivist paradigm. First, as the research questions are closely connected to individuals' experiences, the positivist paradigm, which values objectivity and seeks to prove or disapprove research hypotheses (Ryan, 2018, p.41), doesn't fit the nature of these questions. Second, as this research tries to collect and analyze data from the participants, interpretivism allows the researcher to focus on the specific research topic from multiple perspectives, instead of leading the research into more generalized conclusions as positivism demands (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020, p.42). Third, qualitative methods and interpretivism work better in particular contexts (the MSE and IS in this research) when researchers try to seek deeper understanding of the ideas and discourses that circulate in them (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020, p.43).

### **3.3 Research Approach**

Quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods are the three main approaches applied in academic studies. In a broad sense, quantitative approaches emphasize objectivity, whereas qualitative approaches focus on subjectivity (Feng, 2017, p.72). The quantitative method focuses on acquiring and analyzing numerical data (Choy, 2014, p.102), usually employed to derive objective outcomes, such as frequencies, rates, amounts, and scores (Feng, 2017, p.72). Typically aligned with the positivist paradigm, quantitative research aims to either support or contradict a research hypothesis, identifying relationships between variables, often depicted

descriptively through graphs or charts (Daniel, 2016, p.93). Questions in quantitative research seek unambiguous answers, often employing scientific programs inherited from prior studies (Wang, J., 2014, p.117). Notably, as statistical significance is a decisive factor, the persuasive aspects in quantitative research include sample size, representativeness of the sample, and clear delineation between variables.

Conversely, the qualitative approach emphasizes the richness and depth of research data. When examining qualitative research, crucial elements include the richness of descriptions in the data, the methodology, and the data analysis methods (Quick & Hall, 2015, p.194). Qualitative research centers on personal experiences, and is adept at capturing subjective results like emotions, reasons, feelings, thoughts, behaviors, beliefs, perceptions, representations and contexts, aligning often with the interpretivist paradigm (Aspers & Corte, 2019, p.146; Feng, 2017, p.72). The data and analysis methods in qualitative research are typically complex, offering the researcher the flexibility to analyze data from various perspectives. This characteristic contributes to the nuanced exploration of complex social phenomena (Sofaer, 2002, p.333).

Mixed methods involve collecting both quantitative and qualitative data in response to research questions. Typically, qualitative data is utilized to complement, support, or challenge quantitative findings (Johnson, et al., 2007, p.116). While this approach has numerous advantages, it is not necessary for all research endeavors. The complexity of mixed methods suggests its adoption is most suitable for research projects or topics characterized by multiple tightly connected research questions (Zhang, H., 2012, p.53).

The research methodology is closely tied to the conceptual framework, comprised of theories that shape the overall research direction. Rather than directly answering research questions, the conceptual framework provides relevant theories and concepts, guiding the selection of effective data collection and analysis methods (Hennink et al., 2020, p.37). Two further fundamental conceptual frameworks in research are inductive and deductive approaches. The inductive approach involves deriving general conclusions from specific situations, making it suitable for discussions based on experiences or observations, and analyzing data comprehensively to provide broad perspectives. Conversely, the deductive approach moves from general to specific, making it more fitting for discussions related to

laws, rules, and established principles. This approach involves analyzing specific parts of the data based on theories or predefined hypotheses, with the goal of fully addressing research questions and explaining and demonstrating these theories within the content itself (Trochim & Donnelly, 2001, p.59; Kiger & Varpio, 2020, p.845).

This research shares numerous characteristics with the qualitative approach, making it the most suitable choice.

Firstly, the study aims to explore the behaviour of translators and editors in the translation process within the IS of MSEs in China. The objective is to collect data based on participants' experiences and viewpoints, comprehending these opinions and their underlying reasons in a specific context. The data is subjective and deep, aiming to interpret and explain phenomena in a certain context, aligning with the tenets of qualitative research (Savelle, 2018, p.36).

Secondly, considering the research's scope and questions, the use of the qualitative method is fitting. Unlike quantitative research, which demands large sample sizes, this study involves a small group of participants (16 in total), enabling the acquisition of detailed data pertinent to the research questions.

Thirdly, the researcher is actively engaged in the study, fostering a close relationship with the participants. It is crucial to discuss emic and etic perspectives at this juncture. Emic analysis delves into participants' thoughts, perceptions, classifications of the world, rules for behavior, and their meaningful constructs, providing insights from the participants' standpoint. Conversely, etic analysis shifts the focus to the researcher's observations, categories, explanations, and interpretations, emphasizing what the researcher deems significant (Harris, 1976, p.331). Hence, it is pertinent to examine my role as an 'insider' in this research, denoting that the research is conducted and expanded based on my personal experience. However, despite being the researcher and thus familiar with the research context broadly, I always remain an 'outsider' regarding the perspectives of the research participants (Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 2013, p.251). In this study, the researcher has experience in all the positions in the IS office. I maintain an 'insider' stance due to these experiences, which informs my inspiration and relevant research questions, yet I assume an 'outsider' position concerning the ideas and work routines of the research participants. Drawing from Wilkinson and Kitzinger's

(2013, p.216-217) approach of ‘minimizing’ (making no attempt to involve my experience in the research) and ‘utilizing’ (gaining access to certain groups and design the research by myself), I refrain from asking research questions based on my own perceptions regarding IS, relying instead on existing literature and participants' responses. It is expected that these experiences, along with the experience of operating interviews, could overall aid the interview in this research by understanding the unique pressures in and terminology relevant to each role. Confronted with the substantial data collected, theories from communication, journalism, and translation are applied to enrich the complexity of the study within the interactive context. This qualitative orientation allows the research to be ‘emic’, addressing ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions (Markee, 2012, p.3). Furthermore, previous studies in translation and communication have commonly acknowledged and applied qualitative methods, particularly when human behaviour and its underlying motivations are central to the discussion (Xing, 2006, p.5). Case studies, corpus-based studies, focus groups, and interviews are frequently employed, consistent with the methods employed in this research.

In summary, the application of qualitative methods in this research facilitates a nuanced exploration of research questions within the intersection of communication, sports, and translation, unveiling the intricacies of translation processes within the IS in MSEs in China.

As outlined, the framework of this research comprises subjective data obtained from participants, the methodology used to collect data, the researcher's own experience shaping the research design, and the approach to data analysis. Broadly, this study employs an inductive method aligned with interpretivism and qualitative research principles. This approach fosters openness to participant contributions and allows flexibility in data analysis.

### **3.4 Research Method**

Within qualitative research, the cornerstone of explaining behavior and attitudes lies in obtaining a contextualized understanding of phenomena. Data is typically acquired through recordings of participants' verbal expressions or visual representations (Soiferman, 2010, p.9). Various qualitative research methods exist, including interviews, observations, focus groups,

in-home videos, lifestyle immersion, and real-world dialogue. Among these, interviews, focus groups, and observations emerge as the most frequently employed techniques (Hennink et al., 2020, p.41). Interviews aim to glean insights into individuals' unique perceptions, emotions, and experiences. In contrast, focus groups seek diverse perspectives on a specific subject or the identification of accepted norms. Meanwhile, participant observation focuses on observing how individuals behave in diverse social contexts (Hennink et al., 2020, p.41).

While each method can function independently in qualitative research, interviews offer several advantages over other approaches. Notably, conducting interviews excels in obtaining in-depth information and uncovering personal experiences and is an excellent choice when research questions are best addressed through prose rather than numerical data, especially when the investigation revolves around patterns or preferences (Hennink et al., 2020, p.41). Additionally, they contribute to increased knowledge, foster a better understanding of stakeholders, and enable participants to freely express their opinions, particularly when compared to the group dynamics inherent in focus groups (Irwin & Johnson, 2005, p.825). Furthermore, interviews facilitate the opportunity for timely adjustments in subsequent interviews based on emerging insights (King et al., 2018, p.82), and reveal the underlying stories of participants' experiences, offering an opportunity for detailed exploration. In some cases, they serve as supplementary data to questionnaire responses, allowing researchers to explore deeper into participants' answers by using follow-up questions (McNamara, 1999, p.18). Therefore, a distinctive strength of interviews, setting them apart from other methods, lies in the researcher's ability to review and examine each interview before conducting the next one. This iterative process allows each subsequent interview to benefit from insights gained from prior participants. Opdenakker's comparative study (2006, p.4) explores various interviewing methods, such as face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews, online video interviews, and email interviews. The study concludes that while face-to-face and telephone interviews may be considered traditional, they remain the most adaptable methods due to synchronous communication. To provide further specificity, McNamara (1999, p.21) classifies qualitative interviews into four distinct types. The first type is the informal, conversational interview, initiated without predetermined questions, where the interviewer adapts to the interviewees' responses. The second type is the general interview guide approach, which is

slightly more structured, focusing on collecting information within the same thematic area without predetermined questions. The third type consists of standardized, open-question interviews, also referred to as semi-structured interviews, wherein participants are posed identical open-ended questions, allowing for diverse responses and detailed elaboration on specific topics (Dörnyei, 2007, p.136). The final type is closed, fixed-response interviews, which involve asking participants the same questions with fixed response options.

Conducting a focus group was rejected after careful consideration. There exists the risk that certain participants may not actively engage in the discussion or may be hesitant to share their perspectives, rendering the ‘voiceless’ individuals overlooked (Smithson, 2000, p.108). Moreover, the position of proofreading editors is considered to be of a higher level of position in the IS office, in the context of the focus group where proofreading editors and translators sit together, this difference in position may potentially create pressure that hinders their ability to speak freely. Additionally, the nature of this research makes observation impractical and the most challenging method (Kumar, 2002, p.7). Anonymity holds significant value in this study, particularly considering that the IS business in China may involve political considerations to some extent. In this context, proofreading editors may be hesitant to openly express their political stances in a public setting.

In assessing the advantages and disadvantages of each data collection method, along with the researcher's own experience and identity in the IS, this research applies standardized, open-question interviews. By posing open-ended questions, the researcher not only elicits a diverse range of responses from translators and editors regarding their experiences and preferences in translation and editing but also facilitates the identification of pertinent information, streamlining the subsequent coding process (McNamara, 1999, p.22). This decision also aligns with the central aim of this research, which is to seek to uncover nuanced human concerns and experiences. Additionally, considering cost and convenience, conducting interviews proves to be a more feasible method, especially as interviewees are dispersed across China and the strict COVID control measures. Moreover, the interview sequence in this study follows a pattern of interviewing translators before proofreading editors, mirroring the workflow in the IS office. This sequencing strategy aims to gather insights from translators that may inform and enrich subsequent interviews with proofreading editors.



Lastly, as the researcher, I bring some prior experience in conducting interviews, albeit in a different context from academic research. While I maintain an ‘outsider’ perspective throughout the interview process, my past work experience is valuable in facilitating the rhythm and focus of the interviews.

### **3.5 Sampling**

Sampling decisions in qualitative research are pivotal for a nuanced understanding of the subject under examination. Non-probability sampling (selecting samples from a population using a subjective (non-random) method) is a common approach, granting researchers discretion in selecting a sample, with techniques such as purposive sampling (selecting participants for specific purposes), snowball sampling (selecting subsequent participants on the recommendation and connections of existing participants), quota sampling (dividing participants into mutually exclusive subgroups and then recruiting sample units until the desired quota is reached), and convenience sampling (selecting individuals who are conveniently located or readily available within a specific background) frequently employed (Given, 2008, p.562).

In this study, purposive sampling is adopted. Snowball sampling is avoided, as it relies on participants' networks, potentially leading to a homogeneous group with shared interests or viewpoints due to their interactions and existing shared viewpoints (Sharma, 2017, p.750). This might have resulted in a sample of translators and proofreading editors sharing similar translation ideas, compromising the diversity and richness of the interview data. Given the qualitative research goal of delving deeply into information rather than statistical representation, the necessity for an extensive exploration of each participant's experiences implies that a relatively small number of participants suffices (Hennink et al., 2020, p.19). While this research involves a limited number of participants, quota sampling is unsuitable due to its requirement for larger sample sizes and variations (Sharma, 2017, p.751). Additionally, convenience sampling is not applicable for participant identification in this specific context.

Purposive sampling is commonly employed when a researcher seeks participants with a broad range of perspectives and experiences or individuals who meet specific criteria (Campbell et al., 2020, p.652). The rationale behind adopting purposive sampling is to align the sample with the research goals and objectives, thereby enhancing the study's rigor and the reliability of its data and findings. In the current study, participants are selected based on their prior expertise in relevant positions within the IS in China. This approach is grounded in the expectation that certain participants can offer specific, unique, and valuable insights in response to the research questions (Campbell et al., 2020, p.652).

Qualitative sample sizes should be large enough to reveal a fresh and rich textured understanding of the phenomenon, yet small enough so that the data could be deeply analyzed (Sandelowski, 1995, p.183.). In consideration of the scope of the study, the data quality (in-depth interview data), study design (multi-questions per interviewee), and the use of shadowed data (the interviewees discussing experiences of others) (Morse, 2000, p.4), a total of 16 participants were chosen for the research. The researcher initially contacted 89 translators and 28 proofreading editors from previous IS offices in MSEs in China. 10 translators and 6 proofreading editors were chosen to participate, with selection based on the participants' experience. The participants include both men and women, with translators' experience in the IS ranging from having worked on only one MSE, to having worked on 5. Their ages range from 21 to 32. Proofreading editors' IS experience range from 3 MSEs to 8 MSEs, and their ages range from 26 to 66. The sampling process ensures that the participants not only have specific experiences (IS working experience) that are relevant to the research question, but a diversity in their life experience as well.

Table 3.1: Brief information of the participants

No.	Role	Gender	Age	Experience in IS work (Number of times of participation in the IS work)
1	Translator	M	21	1
2	Translator	M	25	2
3	Translator	M	26	4
4	Translator	F	23	2
5	Translator	F	23	2
6	Translator	F	30	4
7	Translator	F	32	5

8	Translator	M	27	3
9	Translator	F	28	4
10	Translator	M	29	4
11	Proofreading Editor	F	26	2
12	Proofreading Editor	M	42	3
13	Proofreading Editor	M	66	8
14	Proofreading Editor	M	50	5
15	Proofreading Editor	F	58	6
16	Proofreading Editor	F	47	4

### 3.6 Conducting the Research

Prior to conducting any interview, careful consideration of the interview protocols is essential. This research employs a semi-structured interview protocol, characterized by open-ended questions grounded in previous studies and theories. The interviewer maintains flexibility by asking follow-up questions tailored to each participant, and may alter the sequence of questions to elicit more detailed data (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006, p.317). This method is chosen with the objective of fully uncovering each participant's experiences (Knox & Burkard, 2009, p.567). The data were collected over a span of 5 days in January 2023, involving the participation of 10 translators and 6 proofreading editors.

The interviews were conducted online and audio-recorded for several reasons. Firstly, both translators and proofreading editors reside in cities across China. Due to the release of previous strict COVID control policies and the subsequent rise in COVID cases nationwide, conducting face-to-face interviews became impractical. Secondly, the online interview provides the same instantaneous contact as in-person interviews, allowing the researcher to ask follow-up questions and delve deeper into the study subject, aligning with the characteristics of a semi-structured interview (Opdenakker, 2006, p.4). Lastly, the online interview without camera (video-recording) is chosen to create a more relaxed environment for participants to share their experiences. In face-to-face interviews, certain behaviours of the interviewer, such as taking notes or making gestures and facial expressions, can also influence the participants' responses (Musselwhite et al., 2006, p.1068).

The length of the interviews ranged from 19 minutes to 72 minutes. There were 2 days for interviewing the translators and 2 days for grooming and archiving the interview contents. The interviews for the proofreading editors were launched on the fifth day. This arrangement was made in consideration of two reasons: a) it is assumed that the translators would have many things to talk about in relation to the research questions, and the translators' work in the process precedes that of the proofreading editors, so it is logical to interview them in advance; b) In order to get more in-depth information that is pertinent to the study topics in later interviews, operating interviews allows the researcher to modify questions based on earlier interviews (Hennink et al., 2020, p.41). The two-day break gave the researcher time to consider the translators' responses and come up with additional questions for the proofreading editors, as shown on Table 3.4 below. All interviews questions were written in Chinese and were given to the interviewees ahead of the interviews; the questions in the tables below are the translated version.

Table 3.2: Interview questions for translators:

No	Questions
1	Can you share your experience and the things you find interesting in the IS? (Follow up question: what are the characteristics of the translation in the IS?)
2	Are there any skills or rules particularly useful in the translation in the IS according to your experience? (Follow up question: why do you think it is useful and do you think it is appropriate?)
3	Between foreignization and domestication (the researcher explains these if the interviewer is unfamiliar with them), which method do you think you applied most and why?
4	What is your strategy for handling expressions such as idioms in the ST, which may not have corresponding ones in the language of the TT? (Follow up question: do you think this would affect the authentication of the transcript?)
5	There are a lot of technical terms in different sports, do these terms cause challenges during the translation / examining process? (Follow up questions: If so, what are the strategies for dealing with them? )
6	Generally, do you think your transcripts are 100% faithful to the source text? (Follow up question: If not, do you think it is the natural loss in translation or anything else?)
7	Have you ever encountered a situation where you felt it was necessary to paraphrase or edit the transcript? (Follow up questions: What was the situation? Did you do it? Or Do you think this is the proofreading editors' job?)

Table 3.3: Interview questions for proofreading editors

No	Questions
1	Questions 1-5 as above
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	What is the most challenging issue you have found in the transcripts from the translators, and how did you cope with it?
7	According to your experience, how often do you feel you have to edit certain parts of the transcript? (Is it rarely, occasionally, often, or always?) And what is usually the reason for this editing? (Is it an act of being political-correct, information-accurate, reader-oriented, or personal preference)

The majority of questions across the interviews remained consistent, with only a few tailored to elicit specific responses from different groups. Additionally, given the semi-structured nature of the interviews, a considerable number of prompts and probes were employed, aligning with recommendations from King et al. (2008) and McNamara (1999). Additionally, a translation example (see p.141, p.153) provided by interviewee 3, which was perceived as controversial and sparked some discussion, was subsequently presented to the following 7 translators and all 6 proofreading editors for further deliberation.

Table 3.4: Complementary questions generated during the interviews

For whom	Questions
Translators and proofreading editors	Do you think it is necessary to use strong and vivid adjectives and metaphors to make the translation have more of a 'sports flavour'(fit the genre of sports reporting)?
Translators	What are the factors you need to take into consideration when you do /examine the translation? And why?
Proofreading editors	Do you think there are universal rules for proofreading, and what are they?

### 3.7 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is endorsed by scholars who emphasize that theoretical and philosophical foundations serve as frameworks and guidelines for research, but the paramount focus should be on the methods of collecting, analyzing, and generalizing data (Guest, 2012,

p2). Thematic analysis can be very useful to gain an impression of people's opinions, views, attitudes and ideas over a specific theme or topic. Braun and Clarke (2006, p.79) define thematic analysis as: 'A method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns within data'. As Guest (2012, p.14) explains: 'applied thematic analysis as we define it comprises a bit of everything - grounded theory, positivism, interpretivism, and phenomenology - synthesized into one methodological framework'. Thematic analysis exhibits similarities with other qualitative methodologies, such as grounded theory or ethnography, particularly in the process of coding. However, what distinguishes thematic analysis is its flexibility in adopting either an inductive or deductive approach. This compatibility makes thematic analysis an overlapping area for those using qualitative and quantitative analysis, allowing researchers who use various research methods to communicate with each other and engage in ongoing research based on the same dataset (Nowell et.al, 2017, p.3), meaning that thematic analysis is connected with other research methods and offers a finer microscope for analyzing data.

Thematic analysis is arguably the most valuable method for capturing the intricacies of meaning within a textual dataset (Guest, 2012, p.10). A theme is a mode of generalized meaning or responses in the dataset, in an interpretive and summarized way reflecting what a set of data means and look like (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.82). While word-based text analysis concentrates on the meaning of words and phrases, thematic analysis seeks to delve deeper, revealing the underlying meaning, allowing data with similar or related meanings to be grouped into codes for analysis, and leverages the advantages of cultural models and word-based text analysis, requiring a more involved interpretation by the researcher (Guest, 2012, p.10). In this research, thematic analysis serves as the chosen method for data analysis, aligning with the research goal of understanding behaviours closely connected to participants' own experiences.

This study employs the six-step thematic analysis framework developed by Braun and Clarke (2006, p.87). These steps include becoming familiar with the data through repeated reading or listening, generating initial codes, searching for themes, refining and organizing themes, defining and naming themes, and ultimately producing the final report.

In the initial phase, which involved familiarizing myself with the entire dataset, I transcribed the audio recordings into text verbatim. This hands-on approach allowed me to

engage closely with the data. To deepen my understanding, I read each transcript at least twice, ensuring immersion in the material and an appreciation of its significance (Chase, 2005, p.670). I also listened to each narrative immediately after transcription, facilitating preliminary analysis before the data was segmented and coded (Daymon & Holloway, 2005, p.101).

The second phase involved generating initial codes by organizing the data into meaningful units. During this phase, I categorized the data into themes by highlighting them in different colours on a printed copy. Quirkos was also used as a digital analytical tool to systematically organize and categorize the data into easily accessible and transferable digital formats. As Kiger and Varpio (2020, p. 848) describe, this stage operates at a granular level to structure the data systematically. I assigned data segments to multiple codes when applicable, ensuring flexibility for later thematic generalization..

Phases three and four required examining the codes to identify themes that captured essential elements of the data in relation to the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.87). Consistent with Varpio et al. (2017, p. 45), I recognized that themes are not inherently present in the data but are actively constructed by the researcher through a critical examination of the interactions among codes. This process required me to think more critically to uncover meaningful connections within the data, interpreting the deeper meanings, rather than focusing solely on the literal content. For instance, one participant commented that: 'Certain athletes may use the IS platform to express their political or extreme views, which are against most readers'. While this statement may look like it relates to readers, its deeper significance lies in revealing the process of gatekeeping. Through combining and splitting themes, this insight was ultimately categorized under "sensitive information".

The final two phases were relatively straightforward, involving the synthesis of the research data into organized headings and summaries. While thematic analysis provides researchers with the flexibility to label themes based on their understanding of the data, it is essential to ensure that all themes and subthemes in this analysis are logically structured and derived from thoughtful reasoning rather than mere frequency. Additionally, it is important to consider the possibility that all themes, subthemes, and codes are interconnected within the database and accurately reflect the perspectives of the interviewees without excessive

subjective interpretation. Most importantly, I followed the instruction that each theme and subtheme constructed can potentially address the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 88-99). A total of 61 initial codes were generated from the data, which subsequently contributed to the development of subthemes and, ultimately, the main themes (see Appendix B for the list of codes and the graphic representation of codes, subthemes, and themes).

The thematic analysis identified four emergent overarching themes from the data: accuracy, source text, sensitive information, and the readers. Each of these themes contains several sub-themes. In the discussion chapters, existing theories will be drawn upon to provide explanations for the participants' discussions. It is worth noting that Krueger (2002, p.11) also highlights the importance of paying attention to words that prompt discussions or lead to other topics. In the case of this study, certain questions that are relevant to editing, gatekeeping and the organizing committee triggered wider discussions. Meanwhile, the keyword 'political-correctness' also initiated discussions which contributed to this study. Table 3.5 illustrates the thematic framework generated through data analysis. The emerging themes and sub-themes encapsulate the participants' experiences and viewpoints regarding the IS in MSEs in China. Its important to note that no single theme carries more relevance than another, and each theme is determined through an interpretation of the data during analysis.

Table 3.5: Thematic framework of the data analysis

Theme	Sub-theme	Chapter
Accuracy	Proofreading editors' auditing of basic information	4.1
	Translators' strategies in word choice	
	Faithfulness to the completeness of quotations	
	Multiple checks on sports-related data	
Source text	Information with newsworthy meanings	4.2
	The primary consideration in the translation process	
	Challenges in translation in the IS in MSEs in China	
	Proofreading editors' editing principles	
	Text logic	
Sensitive information	Translators' proactive efforts to improve work efficiency	4.3
	Proofreading editors' revisions to ensure the political neutrality of the IS content	
	China as a special case for gatekeeping	
	The Organizing Committee (OC)'s role as an influence on the IS's work	



Readers	Domestication	4.4
	Proofreading editors' consideration on the media's needs	
	The challenge of translating sports terms	
	Difficulties posed by cultural differences during translation and proofreading	

### 3.8 Ethics

In the realm of ethics, two primary aspects must be considered: a) The participants' consent and their right to withdraw from the research (King et al., 2018, p.37, p.42); b) The confidentiality of the participants, including but not limited to their interests, topic sensitivity, cross-cultural concerns (Knox & Burkard, 2009, p.572), as well as the researcher's relationship with the interviewees outside the interview context (King et al., 2018, p.87).

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the University of Wales Trinity Saint David prior to data collection, ensuring adherence to ethical guidelines. Specifically, measures are taken to safeguard the rights and anonymity of the participants, as approved by the Examining Board. A written consent form was delivered to participants before commencing the interviews, following the guidelines outlined by Edwards and Holland (2013, p.67) and the recommendations of Wiles et al. (2005), ensuring full agreement before the data collection process. This form (see Appendix A) covers various aspects, including the participants' right to withdraw from the interview, approval for recording, and consent for the use of data afterward. The interview questions were shared with participants prior to the consent form to provide them with over 24 hours of reflection on their willingness to participate in the research (Wiles et al., 2005, p.16). All interviewees signed their agreements to participate in the research. The research was initiated during the Chinese Spring Festival period, which provided more flexibility in accessing time slots for the interviews.

Another noteworthy element in the consent form pertains to obtaining consent from 'vulnerable' individuals (Wiles et al., 2005, p.16), segueing into the second ethical consideration: safeguarding the confidentiality of interviewees and their opinions. Topic sensitivity might affect participants' willingness to take part in the research, or even if they do, they may give answers avoiding the sensitive topic, which causes the data to be incomplete

(Knox & Burkard, 2009, p.572). The sensitivity of this research lies in the dilemma over whether translators and proofreading editors admit to editing some of their translation and, if so, why. To address these ethical concerns, three measures are implemented. Firstly, information is conveyed to participants as part of the informed consent process, explicitly stating that the research would exclusively be utilized for academic purposes, such as discussing the research aims and purposes with the interviewees, reassuring them that all their opinions would be accepted and respected (King et al., 2018, p.37). Secondly, names and personal information of all participants were treated with utmost anonymity, including among other participants. Thirdly, after each interview, a post-interview discussion was conducted with the participants to confirm their comfort with the information they had provided and to address any potential feelings of insecurity that may arise after the interview (Wiles et al., 2005, p.15). By doing so, from the beginning to the end, this study not only protects interviewees' identity, but shows respect for their willingness to participate in the study and their views as well.

The potential for role conflict on the part of the researcher is acknowledged as a factor that could influence data collection. This is because social connections between the interviewer and the interviewee outside the interview setting may lead interviewees to speak more cautiously or feel uncomfortable about what they choose to share (King et al., 2018, p.87). As suggested, communication with the participants in advance and paying more attention to their answers might address this issue (King et al., 2018, p.87). Before the interviews, it is reasonable to anticipate that participants might express what they perceived the researcher wants to hear. Moreover, there is a slight possibility that the translators might offer similar responses, potentially aligning their opinions with what they believe the proofreading editors would ideally approve. Following the guidelines of King et al. (2018, p.87), participants were reassured that the researcher only functioned in the role of a researcher and was incapable of personally passing judgment on any issue they may raise during the interviews.

### 3.9 Validity

It is imperative to make the research's objectives, methodology, chosen tactics, and details of data gathering and management transparent (Hammarberg et al., 2016, p.500). To enhance validity, this research primarily utilizes the data corpus from previous IS works, employing a form of 'triangulation' to minimize the potential impact of the dual role of the researcher being both translators in a translation study.

Credibility necessitates that the participants' expressions align with the researcher's conclusions, ensuring consistency between the participants' intended meaning and the researcher's portrayal of the data (Tobin & Begley, 2004, p.391). The term 'triangulation' originates from ancient navigation, where the geometrical principle of the triangle is used to precisely determine the last location based on two known locations (Heale & Forbes, 2013, p.98). Being introduced to qualitative research in the 1950s, triangulation is considered an approach to enhance confidence and richness in research across methods, data, researcher, and theories (Hales, 2010, p.14). Given the data-driven nature of this research, several methods were employed as efforts in data collection triangulation. Firstly, participants, especially translators, were provided with transcripts of their respective interviews, allowing them to review and approve the generalized data, with a focus on identifying any missing information. This step aims to ensure the integrity of the interview data. Secondly, the conclusions drawn from the interviews were shared with participants to comment on the data analysis procedure and final results. Finally, after generating conclusions from the transcripts of each interviewee, archives of previous IS works were compared to ascertain whether these conclusions fit or can be reflected. This additional validity process serves to verify whether interviewees honestly expressed their opinions and whether the previous database can support the conclusions drawn, even though it is not the primary aim of the study. This is because triangulation results do not necessarily have to conform to expected findings; they can serve as a supplement to primary findings from different perspectives or even present a total contradiction (Hales, 2010, p.14). In this research, the triangulation process demonstrated that the findings were consistent with and broadly captured the interviewees' intended messages, with no objections or disagreements raised.

As the researcher, I also took part in the translation process of this study. Therefore, in the next section, I will discuss how I avoid the impact of my identity on this translation study.

### **3.10 The dual role of the researcher in translation studies**

The dual role of researchers as translators in translation research is linked to the phenomenon wherein researchers involved in the translation process may draw imprecise conclusions influenced by their own preferences in translation and language competence. Thus, the engagement of researchers, translators, and participants is acknowledged, embodying the concept of ‘Triple Subjectivity’ (Temple & Edwards, 2002, p.6). Echoing triangulation theory, it means that researchers, translators, and participants are encouraged to collaborate, ensuring the accuracy of the transcripts aligns with the shared understanding of cultural differences among them. To reach this goal, this research adopts several approaches suggested by the literature in the process of data collection and analysis. According to the theory proposed by Nurjannah et al. (2014, p.1), addressing questions such as ‘when should the translation process begin?’, ‘who should perform the translation?’, and ‘what is the translation procedure?’—when thematic analysis is applied, the translation process should commence after completing the data collection. In this research, as the interview language is Chinese, so data is collected in Chinese. The actual translation process began after the entire data collection is concluded.

In this research, it is important to note that the researcher translated all participant quotes from Chinese to English. This introduces a nuanced layer of evaluation concerning the accuracy of the translation—a process within the broader context of a translation study. To mitigate potential inaccuracies, consistent with the ‘Triple Subjectivity’ theory, the translation of data undergoes verification with the interviewees during the interviews. Two approaches were employed for this verification. Firstly, responses to questions relevant to the study were repeated by the researcher in real-time during the interviews to ensure that the researcher’s understanding of the feedback aligns with that of the interviewees. If no corrections were made by the interviewees, these initial verbal translations (or interpretations) were deemed suitable for the subsequent translation of data and data analysis. Secondly, given that all

interviewees are fluent in both English and Chinese, the English vocabulary used by the interviewees in their responses was directly employed for the translation of data and subsequent data analysis. However, during the translation of data, especially in the quotes utilized in the discussion chapter, the researcher adopted an approach that prioritized readability, precision, and articulation. When confronted with terms that posed challenges in translation, the researcher employed the strategy of ‘deconstruction’ (providing explanations) rather than attempting to generalize the meanings of the terms (Filep, 2009, p.69).

Following a review of the interview scripts, initial codes were presented to the participants in English to provide insights for the primary coding stage. The main codes, and later the subthemes which were generated by the researcher were shared and explained to the participants for approval, constituting a repeated process of translation verification. I ensured that this process incorporates a discussion of the translation and my interpretation of the data, enabling participants to exchange ideas and rectify any misinterpretations in a relaxed environment, rather than simply mechanically listing my ideas and seeking approval in an aggressive and persuasive manner. In this way, the participants were actually involved in the whole data analysis progress, contributing their translation skills from the beginning to the end. In fact, the greatest strength of this research is that the participants are bilingual experts themselves, so their suggestions and comments include their evaluations on the researcher’s translation and analysis of the data. In all, to minimize the bias of the research conclusions from the perspective of researcher involved in the translation process, this research has mingled the translation work into the process of data analysis, together with the participants who are equally skillful as translators.

### **3.11 Limitations**

This research has certain limitations in its scope, focusing exclusively on members of the IS team in interviews. As the IS team is assembled specifically for the MSE, member selection is constrained by the availability of candidates with actual experience in their IS work, including that of translators and proofreading editors in the IS office. However, this limitation provides an opportunity to gather valuable insights from specialists interviewed as

the criteria for selecting the interviewees reduced the availability. Moreover, the sample size might appear insufficient given the involvement of hundreds of translators in the IS. However, the proofreading editors are usually fixed members of the IS team in China and they construct an inner circle in this relatively exclusive business, which in turn provides an inner view for this study. It's also noteworthy that a different selection of participants, especially translators who are usually freelancers chosen and trained before the MSEs, within the IS office could yield a distinct dataset and potentially inequable results.

In the context of qualitative research methods and thematic analysis, it's acknowledged that the research questions may carry a subjective element influenced by the researcher's experiences and thoughts. Similarly, data collection may reflect subjectivity based on the participants' individual perceptions. The interview questions, including follow-ups, were formulated based on existing academic theories and the researcher's experience, which may differ from the perspectives of other researchers or scholars. Besides, these previous theories proposed by studies on the MSEs and the IS were limited, especially within the context of China and translation. These constraints may impact the breadth and generalizability of the research findings. Additionally, other translation and journalism theories that were not referenced in this research might also be applicable to explore the IS in China.

Finally, while the IS business is global, this research specifically studies the IS business in MSEs in China, with a focus on the translation process. Its findings may not be directly applicable to other countries where the native language is English and translation is not involved, or the whole media system operates dissimilarly. Meanwhile, the setting of this study is relatively less operational for other translation scholars due to their access to the IS business, which is usually temporary.

### **3.12 Chapter Summary**

This chapter has outlined the methodology employed in this research, highlighting an interpretive, qualitative research design using an inductive approach to address the research questions. A total of sixteen interviews, involving ten translators and six proofreading editors, were conducted. The interviews employed a semi-structured format with open-ended

questions to delve into the participants' strategies and opinions based on their past experiences in IS work. Thematic analysis serves as the data processing method, leading to the identification of four key themes. Limitations, ethical considerations, and methods to substantiate the research data and findings have been delineated. The forthcoming chapter will engage in a comprehensive discussion of each theme and its associated sub-themes, accompanied by relevant literature. It is pertinent to acknowledge that the frequency of quotes attributed to each interviewee varies significantly. However, this discrepancy does not imply that certain quotes hold greater value or that the words of specific interviewees carry more authority or favoritism from the researcher. All quotes are meticulously selected based on their relevance to the ideas delineated in previous studies, the significance conveyed by the data, and their alignment with each theme. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that in cases where quotes could be interpreted in relation to multiple themes, priority is accorded to the quotes that exhibit the strongest connection to the respective theme. Regarding the translation of quotes, I adopted a straightforward and simple method. The translation and usage of all quotes presented in this chapter were sent to the relevant interviewee. This process was undertaken to obtain permission for their usage and to ensure their accuracy.

## Chapter 4: Discussion

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the deeper analysis of selected quotes, providing insight into their alignment with the identified themes. Additionally, specific case examples and theories are used to analyze the quotes, providing support and a clearer demonstration of the concepts.

### 4.2 Theme 1: Accuracy - A generalized term to avoid errors

The IS in MSEs in China aims to offer bilingual, detailed, vivid, timely and precise event-related information to the registered media (Jiang, 2014, p.14). Due to the intensity of the MSE itself and the high standard of the information required, the whole IS team has to focus on every aspect of the information and the requirements of the IS working manual. Participants were invited to talk about their ideas and understandings of the characteristics of the IS work and their methods of handling the content in their respective positions. *Accuracy*, as a keyword repeatedly mentioned by both translators and proofreading editors, emerges as the first theme in this research. It overlaps with other words with the same meaning in the transcripts of the interviews such as ‘precision’, ‘correctness’, ‘truthfulness’, etc. There are four sub-themes under ‘*accuracy*’: proofreading editors’ auditing of basic information, translators’ strategies in word choice, faithfulness to the completeness of the quotes; multiple checks on sports-related data.

#### 4.2.1 Proofreading editors’ auditing of basic information

Proofreading editors not only undertake the task of publishing Chinese content in the INFO system for the media to read, but are also responsible for the validity of the information they deliver. Some proofreading editors refer to ‘double-checking’ the information rather than using the word ‘trust’. As interviewee 12 (proofreading editor) states:

*When I do proofreading, I don't just check the content. Our work has datelines, directly*



*indicating the essential elements of any interview such as date, place and interviewees. On the contrary, because the formats of dateline are always fixed, or to say, similar, translators sometimes just copy and paste them in their work. It is not a big deal to adopt this approach to be quick, but if it is the next day, it will often lead to wrong dates or wrong rounds (of competition). What I have found from my experience in the IS is that athletes' names and nationalities are generally correct, but dates and rounds are the easiest to forget to modify. Publishing such a work is a major mistake, so I will pay special attention to the information in the datelines.*

What interviewee 12 mentioned is basic and essential information in the content offered by the IS, the dateline, a leftover format from news agencies. Usually, a dateline has all the necessary elements of what the media expect to know: location, date, athlete's name, nationality, the round of competition, result, and the event's name. Here is an example of a dateline from the 2018 14<sup>th</sup> FINA World Swimming Championships (25 m):

*HANGZHOU, Dec 14. – Comments from Troy PINA (CPV) after the fourth heat of the men's 50m butterfly at the 14<sup>th</sup> FINA World Swimming Championships (25m) at the Hangzhou Olympic and International Expo Center on Friday.*

Interviewee 12's comment is unsurprising, given that a significant portion of the dateline is usually standardized, making copying and pasting the most efficient method for translators. This is particularly true when translating the dateline, as the athlete's name is typically retained in English and doesn't require translation. Since the dateline serves as the initial information that the media will encounter, it is both reasonable and essential for proofreading editors to prioritize and carefully consider this aspect.

Interviewee 13 (proofreading editor) shares a very unexpected experience in the IS work, from the perspective of the IOC country codes:

*It's very interesting to say that not only the translators, but also our proofreading editors sometimes get the IOC country codes wrong, so I examine this very seriously. Every time we worked for the IS, there were translators who did it wrong. This is a big joke if it goes*

wrong. The nationalities in our works are all abbreviated, using the IOC country codes. Of course, we are familiar with most of them, because the first three letters or consonants of the country's English name are generally used. But some are really hard to guess. For example, the code of South Africa is RSA, because there is an extra 'republic' in front. Also, the IOC country codes keep changing. For instance, the IOC code of Singapore changed from SIN to SGP in 2016. It took us a long time to get used to it. Translators also often confuse Switzerland with Sweden, probably because the Chinese names of the two countries are too similar. I know that this information is very simple and basic, but it is also the most error-prone.

According to interviewee 13, the IOC country codes are not easy to master. However, no translator has ever mentioned anything concerning the IOC country codes in the interviews. To some extent, proofreading editors also pay more attention to detail in their work. It could be assumed that translators always try to finish their translations in time and focus on translating the main body of the content, yet proofreading editors have discovered this careless error from their own experience.

Interview 15 (proofreading editor) indicates the mistake that every Chinese translator inevitably makes:

*I think that as a translator, your Chinese must at least be good enough to be delivered without obvious grammar mistakes. But let me talk about it again, almost 70% of the translations require me to modify ‘的’(de), ‘地’(di or de), ‘得’(de). Sometimes it is really irritating to fix such basic things and waste time, but I can also understand why there are mistakes. Many translators don't care much about this issue. As a proofreading editor, I do not specifically raise this issue either. However, I personally think this is a significant and essential issue for me, otherwise other media will question our professionalism in making mistakes like confusing adjectives and adverbs, which are taught in primary school.*

The issue of ‘的’(de), ‘地’(di or de), and ‘得’(de) in translation is a language-specific

challenge in Chinese. The similarities in pronunciation and the use of Pinyin (a systematic way to represent the pronunciation of Chinese characters using the familiar Latin alphabet) contribute to common mistakes, especially since these distinctions are not often applied in daily communication. Chinese, being a complex language with meanings intricately tied to individual words, has many non-universal grammatical rules. Blindly applying a single rule to all language phenomena can lead to errors (Luo, 2022, p.4). To elaborate, ‘的’ is used after an attribute or to denote possession, ‘地’ modifies an adjective after a verb, and ‘得’ is used before a complement (Septevery et al., 2021, p.82). Interviewee 15 offers a unique perspective among proofreading editors, focusing not on the accuracy of factual information related to athletes and MSEs from the source text (ST), but on the correctness of Chinese usage. This underscores that proofreading editors are also required to have an excellence in Chinese writing to at least meet the demand of standardized Chinese grammar.

#### **4.2.2 Translators’ strategies in word choice**

In this research, when translators talk about their translation work, many mention the accuracy of the translation, and word choice is significant here. Word choice is not only about the accurate output of the meaning expressed in the source text (English), but also about whether satisfactory feedback can be obtained in the target text (Chinese). Interviewee 3 (translator) observes as follows:

*I think you have to think carefully when translating. Because many words in English have multiple meanings, it is absolutely impossible to use whichever word comes to mind, especially since deviations often occur. More attention should be paid when translating from Chinese to English. What impressed me deeply was that once the word ‘关心 (curious about/ be interested in)’ was mentioned in Chinese, I translated it into ‘concerned about’. It has a close meaning to ‘curious about’, yet is closer to ‘worry about’. Later, the proofreading editor specifically talked to me about this problem with the wording and even made criticisms, because this is a work mistake in his/her opinion, it is not the meaning expressed by the source text at all, and it is completely inaccurate. Another time was about a gymnastics competition. The athlete said that she tried to 旋*

*转(spin). My translation used the word 'revolve', which was obviously wrong. Therefore, when I encounter some difficult words in my translating now, I use the English-English dictionary to look them up again to ensure that the words I use are accurate, especially verbs and some emotional adjectives.*

Interviewee 3's detailed points on word choice underscore the significance of precision in translation, where any inaccuracy or deviation from the source text (ST) meaning is considered an error. Notably, the emphasis on paying special attention to verbs and adjectives expressing emotions aligns with Li and Shi's (2017) perspective on translation. Li and Shi stress that the primary essence of translation lies in understanding the meaning and effectively conveying the expression (p.9). Understanding the basic logical relationship between subject, predicate verb, and object is highlighted as crucial, along with the correct usage of adjectives, adverbs, and other modifiers for expressiveness (p.10). The attention given to predicate verbs and the comprehension of adjectives by Interviewee 3 reflects a standard approach to translation work. It is suggested that challenges in word choice, especially for verbs, may be more prominent in translations from Chinese to English due to the translator's native language being Chinese. Translators might find it easier to identify corresponding Chinese words from English. Furthermore, translating from Chinese to English poses difficulties with verbs, as verbs in English can work independently of subjects, resulting in numerous verbs with subtly different meanings (Li & Shi, 2017, p.121), such as 'spin' and 'revolve'. In contrast, Chinese verbs often work in conjunction with subjects to convey meaning. The word choice of adjectives or adverbs is identified as another issue present in translations, whether from Chinese to English or vice versa.

Interviewee 5 (translator) shares the experience of struggling to use adjectives and adverbs in the translation process:

*Every time I translate from English to Chinese, I encounter some trouble. The first is words of the same meaning that the athlete repeated several times. If the source text kept them this way, it must be necessary. In this case, it needs to be emphasized layer by layer. What impressed me deeply was what a swimmer said in a swimming competition: "I*

*swam very fast today, but I can still go faster, I need to be rapid, or even expeditious, so that I can beat my fleeting opponent in tomorrow's final.” I have no problem understanding English at all, but if it is translated into Chinese, I have to ponder over the adjectives. Finally, I chose to use comparatives one after another because I don't think we have so many adjectives in Chinese for describing 'fast'. The second trouble is some very neutral adjectives. For example, an athlete said that his performance today was 'acceptable'. I hate encountering words in this category because it is too challenging to translate. Is it 'not good enough' or is it 'just satisfactory'? I have to look through the context, and sometimes it is necessary to check the athlete's previous competition results. Most of the time I just choose another ambiguous word in Chinese to match the source text, unless I am sure about the neutral word being negative or positive. I believe these details are very important because if you are careless, you will be inaccurate, so you must work hard on word choice. I am not talking about 100% precision, but as close as can be. When there is really no word that I can think of, I will keep my first choice, at least it will be accurate.*

The two phenomena mentioned by Interviewee 5 are typical for word choice in translation. The first is similar to that mentioned by interviewee 3, that is, there are multiple words with the same Chinese meaning in English, but there are subtle differences between them. When translating from English to Chinese, due to the there being fewer Chinese words, it is impossible to accurately convey the meaning of the ST through the literal meaning of the words. It is necessary to use other function words as complementary or logic to make the TT consistent with the ST (Li & Shi, 2017, p.153). This behaviour also echoes the subtheme 'text logic' explored in the next section. The second phenomenon mentioned is a more detailed word choice, also relevant to the accuracy of translation. For those ambiguous words, Interviewee 5's final choice still corresponds to the ST. It can be speculated that some of the struggles of the translators on word choice reflect the characteristics of the two languages, Chinese and English. Chinese tends to use logic to express meaning, and if it needs to be expressed accurately, a text background needs to be added, while English can express meaning with more precise words and grammar. This also explains why English is more

streamlined than Chinese in terms of text output (Li & Shi, 2017, p.47). It is also worth discussing that Interviewee 5 mentions the phenomenon of failing to find a compatible word. In this scenario, she still chooses to keep the original word choice even though it might not seem good enough in the TT. It could be argued that when facing numerous choices, translators still choose a safer method, that is presenting an accurate version of the ST.

Interviewee 8 (translator) shares a unique perspective on translation, including taking word choice as a main method for the whole translation process in terms of getting closer to the TT:

*In my opinion, translation is the same as writing. It's just that this writing does not require thinking, but retells English in Chinese. The process of retelling is to select the most accurate words that match the Chinese expression, and then connect them together. Word choice should be the most difficult part because this is the cell in the entire body. Accuracy is, of course, the priority, and definitely, it needs to conform to our Chinese language habits, otherwise, the translation will not be very smooth (very hard to read with clear signs of translation). For example, when I encounter the word 'prefer', I will always translate it into '喜爱 (like)'. The literal meaning of the word 'prefer' is too strange in Chinese. I always read my translations before submitting them to avoid traces of English, I do not want to be criticized by proofreading editors.*

Interviewee 8 not only underscores the importance of accuracy in word choice but also advocates for considering the language habits of the target language, resembling an approach of domestication. Additionally, Interviewee 8 draws a subtle connection between translation and writing, suggesting that, when viewed as writing, translators must adhere to basic writing rules, ensuring accuracy and fluency in language. If literal translation falls short of these standards, translators should explore alternative ways to convey the intended meaning (Li & Shi, 2017, p.89). Cai (2011, p.55) also mentions that when translating from English to Chinese, the translator's level in Chinese (articulation and professionalism etc.) will greatly affect the quality of the translation. The challenge lies in avoiding 'translationese' (see section 4.3.3), where the translation bears traces of the ST. While translation with such traces may

maintain information accuracy, it risks compromising the authenticity of the Chinese expression, impacting perceived professionalism. Interviewee 8's emphasis on word choice reflects a dual consideration: aiming for professionalism and steering clear of potential negative feedback from proofreading editors.

In the pursuit of accuracy, focusing on word choice is a method that many translators apply. It is worth mentioning that translators' perception of word choice focuses more on being 'expressive' in the TT, reflecting their potential preference for domestication strategy. It can be speculated that decisions on word choice will also be an important part of proofreading editors' work due to the fact that proofreading editors read the English ST and translation side by side, and it is easier for them to find any mistranslation.

#### **4.2.3 Faithfulness to the completeness of quotations**

The IS aims to provide registered media with timely information about what happens in the MSE. Interviews with MSE participants from athletes, coaches, spectators, etc. are generally published as flash quotes. The news conferences of medal winners and other activities are written as press conference highlights (see section 2.3.2). As the two most important types of genres published by the IS (although the content of these two is different), they are both released in the format of quotes, with the purpose of restoring the original words of the interviewees or spokesperson. For the translation of quotes, translators and proofreading editors share more specific strategies.

Interviewee 4 (translator) summarizes the characteristics of quotes and shared his ideas on how to translate quotes effectively and quickly:

*The biggest feature of quotes is that they are relatively scattered and not concentrated enough, especially in the interviews with athletes and coaches right after the competition. Because the journalists' questions are all about the competition that just ended, they are more targeted, and the answers of the interviewees are also more emotional. In many cases, their answers do not contain key points. I somehow believe that is the beauty of quotes. When I am translating English into Chinese, my method of translating quotes is*

*to translate everything that the interviewee said, even if there are repetitions or inconsistencies, I will keep the integrity of the quotes. As I said before, it is necessary to keep consistency with the source text, and it must be reasonable for the English editors to keep the colloquial text. If you try to comprehend and translate at the same time, not only is it time-consuming, but the translated words may not be accurate.*

Interviewee 4 fully summarizes the characteristics of flash quotes, in line with previous academic studies, that is, the respondents' answers are generally influenced by emotions, they are timely, rich in content, colloquial in expression and full of emotion (Guo, 2016, p.123). This adds a lot of drama to competition. For instance, when Radwanska lost to Lisicki 0-3 in an epic Wimbledon semifinal in 2013, she did not shake hands with her opponent after the game. When asked about the handshake scene, she responded: 'Should I just be there and dance?' This quote became the headline of almost all the reports on this match. As a previous study suggests, quotes from athletes are newsworthy because they precisely reflect their feelings at the time and thoughts on the competition, and due to sports being competitive and emotionally engaging, quotes are often used as headlines for sports news (Jiang, 2014, p.15). The suggestion is that, owing to the nature of flash quotes, media outlets prefer translations that are accurate, competent, and possibly even raw. The relatively 'informal' yet informative style of presenting flash quotes aligns with what they assume the media require. As other interviewees have similarly indicated, the prevailing approach to translating flash quotes involves prioritizing accuracy and completeness.

Interviewee 6 (translator) presents the characteristics of quotations in press conference highlights and emphasizes the importance of keeping these quotes intact:

*Press conference highlights are collections of selected quotations. Personally, I think press conference quotes are easier to translate than flash quotes. Because the press conference is more formal, the answers are all organized and orderly, and the atmosphere means it's not the kind of occasion where you can speak freely. In addition, press conferences are generally intended to convey certain important pieces of information or to carry out public relations activities, and the purpose is very clear. So*



*for each quotation, the question and answer are very clear. When translating, especially from Chinese to English, I never miss a word. Because usually the officials or spokesman of any delegation who participate in the press conference all have their speeches prepared in advance, and every word they said is carefully thought out and definitely has its meaning.*

It is intriguing that considerations over accuracy in translating press conference highlights go beyond the mere content, words, or languages and extend to the nature of the conference and the participants involved. This perspective aligns with Jiang and Guo's (2018, p.75) assertion that press conference highlights should be refined, accurate, complete, serious, and organized, while putting the seriousness of the content in line with the participants' social positions in and outside the MSE. Interviewee 6's viewpoint on the significance of participants being leaders and having prepared speeches adds another layer of interest. In many instances, the organizing committee (OC) would use press conferences to release crucial information, leveraging the media's reach for publicity. From a translator's standpoint, particularly for interviewee 6, this is seen as politically sensitive, highlighting the broader implications and considerations beyond the linguistic aspects of translation.

Interviewee 12 (Proofreading editor) offers a particular definition of quotations, along with mentioning the common mistakes that translators make:

*Quotes are the most important part of our IS work. Whether it is flash quotes or press conference highlights, they are presented in the form of questions and answers. Quotes are quoted, which means that the content inside should be what the interviewees said exactly. The purpose of using quotes in our work is to provide authenticity. So in my opinion, any quote should be presented 100% completely without any editing. Moreover, there is a risk of editing others' quotes. When the media uses them, they interpret them from a different angle. The interviewee will be unhappy and say that you have tampered with the interview. Anyway, it is right for us to fully present what the interviewees said, so as not to cause unnecessary trouble for ourselves. Regardless of whether the interviewee made a mistake or the content could be analyzed from multiple angles, I*

*hope the translator can translate it literally without thinking too much. Many translators like to translate with their own understanding, which in my opinion is inaccurate because you can't understand what the interviewee's intention is. Some translators like to rearrange the interviewee's words to make them look more logical, which is also wrong in my opinion. Because whatever the interviewee says reflects his personal characteristic or a kind of emotion at that time. My idea is that since it is a quote, it needs to be completely consistent and cannot be edited. If you process it too much, it is not a quote but an article.*

According to Interviewee 12, the essence of quotes lies in completely and accurately translating what the interviewee says into text in the target language. This will not only meet the work standard of the IS, but will also avoid unnecessary trouble. From Interviewee 12's point of view, providing quotes by the IS is just a process of converting speech into text, and there is no need to overthink it. However, if the translator over-edits it, it will violate the working principles of the IS and the intention of providing quotes. Here, interviewee 12 makes a clear distinction between quotes and other content provided by the IS. From another perspective, Jiang (2012) points out that the media also hope that the quotes they read represent the most original and complete content. The content required by each media outlet is different, and the angle of reporting the event is not similar (p.23), and the IS does not have the right or the privilege to guide the media coverage of the MSE (p.25).

To sum up, quotes are widely used in the work of the IS, which is in line with the aims of the IS in terms of providing unbiased information about what competitors have said. Both translators and proofreading editors are aware of the importance of ensuring the integrity of quotes. However, the faithfulness and accuracy mentioned here are slightly different. Faithfulness refers to maintaining a comprehensive display of quotes, and any guiding or editing quotes with translators' own interpretation and standpoint is not appreciated. Accuracy refers to the precise expression of information in a translation. Therefore, faithfulness falls under the theme of accuracy.

#### 4.2.4 Multiple checks on sports-related data

Sports-related data is one of the main features of the IS. From the perspective of news, the biggest feature of sports news compared with other news is its rich sports data, such as competition results, competition rounds, new records, year of competition, athlete résumés, best results, etc. (Jiang & Guo, 2018, p.74). As an office that provides comprehensive communication services for MSEs, the IS has extremely high requirements for sports-related information. By convention, the official timing system of the MSE must set up an individual terminal in the IS office so that the IS staff can quickly check the most accurate competition results. The internal network must also be equipped with terminals that can view various sports-related data such as athletes' résumés and recent competition results. In this research, translators and proofreading editors also discuss in detail the issue of being accurate on sports-related data.

Interviewee 11 (proofreading editor) shares her opinion that all sports-related data should be checked:

*I will say the hardest part of our IS job is checking the competition data. For example, an interview with an athlete who has won a gold medal will definitely include his/her competition results. These results are subject to change. Due to the time difference, the data that the journalists collect in the competition venue are given is often different from the final official timing results. And generally, the official ones will be more accurate, for example, to a few digits after the decimal point. Also, in terms of record-breaking, whether it is an Olympic record, a world championship record, an Asian record, or a world record, these are all particular. Sometimes more than one record is broken. This data must be checked repeatedly before publishing. Therefore I always feel very stressed towards the end of an MSE, as there is too much data to handle.*

The problem proposed by Interviewee 11 is indeed very common in any MSE. Therefore, if there is a major event such as breaking records or cancellation of results due to violations of regulations, the IS will publish a single article, or like a simple announcement on behalf of the

organizing committee, which belongs to the 'News Flash' column. Usually, the content of 'News Flash' is only one sentence, informative and clear. Interviewee 11's focus revolves around numerical data and factual information in the context of sports competitions. These data encompass a broad range, including but not limited to previous world, continental, Olympic, championship, and personal records, as well as comparative results, execution and difficulty scores in gymnastics or diving, and more (Zhang et al., 2019, p.212). Jiang (2014, p.15) says that such factual sports data are the primary content that media outlets seek in sports news. While sports inherently involve competition and performance results, Jiang's perspective could be debated in that there is still value placed on sentimental aspects, such as the concept of participating in sports to promote peace, particularly within the context of Olympic Spirits.

Interviewee 12 (proofreading editor) shares another aspect of data that he feels should be considered carefully:

*Every time I see an article with many numbers, I want to throw it to another proofreading editor. English editors especially like to write interesting articles before the game, such as 'Fun Numbers', so a bunch of numbers need to be verified one by one. It is such an exhausting job. There is also the difference in units, such as the conversion between miles and km. Using miles in the English is no problem, but not in Chinese. Therefore, I have to calculate it myself and add a new translation with brackets. In addition to the unit, there are competition bonuses, which also need to be converted into RMB from other currencies every time.*

The 'Fun Numbers' article, as described, involves arranging quotations or interesting figures dedicated to presenting entertaining MSE facts corresponding to each number. Interviewee 12 underscores the importance of not only examining data for competition results but also for comprehensive information about the MSE. Additionally, the novel suggestion of addressing unit conversion, mentioned by Interviewee 12, is noteworthy. In the consumption of news, readers encounter familiar units daily and may not realize the need for conversion when translating from English to Chinese. Although Interviewee 12 is the sole participant

mentioning unit conversion in this research, this approach aligns with Munday's (2016, p.223) proposed method of translation, which leans towards domestication, as discussed in section 2.4.2. This behaviour is more reader-friendly, and is related to another theme, *The reader*, as mentioned later.

Interviewee 7 (translator) also makes a comment on how sports-related data and facts cause challenges in translation and needs to be checked:

*Every time I translate, if there is a competition result, I will check it again in the system. I am afraid that the reporter made a mistake when writing. Or that the result will change after the English content is published. What I'm afraid of most is that the results that need to be checked are not in the same system. For example, if an athlete has broken the world record today and also has broken his own best result, there are three numbers: today's new record, the previous world record and the athlete's personal best. Today's new record can be checked in the official timing system. The world record may be checked on the website of the sports association. Personal best results need to be checked in the athlete's résumé. This is not a small amount of work. In addition, Chinese likes to use the ten-thousand base system, while English uses the thousand base system. When the number is large, the conversion is also a headache. But these are the most basic facts, and there must be no mistakes. If there is a mistake, it will be a translation accident and will be scolded to death by any proofreading editor.*

All the double-checking of the data is to maintain the accuracy of the translation. The numeration system mentioned in Interviewee 7 is a problem that will be encountered in any bilingual work between Chinese and English. However, the data from the competition records is usually reliable. The IS members do not want to make mistakes in such basic details. If there is a mistake, this is also data with a source, referencing from other official websites, and it is not a mistake of the IS. It can be seen from the repeated inspection of sports-related data that translators and proofreading editors are also very aware of what the IS provides, and at the same time are aware of how to prevent themselves from making mistakes.

When it comes to accuracy, most translators say that they need to be careful, otherwise

they will be criticized by proofreading editors. It can be seen that a strict hierarchy still exists in the IS office, and the proofreading editors put a lot of pressure on the translators. It can also be surmised that some ‘criticized’ mistakes are those that translators often make but should not make, so these mistakes are intentionally raised by the proofreading editors.

Interviewee 15 (proofreading editor) shares a surprising experience of his previous work:

*I think double checking the data is very necessary. We all make mistakes somehow, and I had discovered mistakes in the ST, written and published by the foreign experts.*

Interviewee 15’s viewpoint further strengthens the fact that the work of proofreading editors goes beyond proofreading the translation to checking data and figures, not from the translation, but from the ST.

#### **4.2.5 Summary of theme 1**

In this section, participants in the study have conveyed their perspectives on maintaining the accuracy of translations, particularly in the context of IS content, which often involves quotes. Quotes are a significant component of the IS’ outputs, and both translators and proofreading editors employ strategies to keep their translations closely aligned with the English ST in terms of presentation and completeness. The value derived from these interviews lies in the realization that accuracy extends beyond textual interpretation from the ST to the TT. It involves the precision of sports-related data and other relevant factual information generated for IS works. The interviews reveal that, in terms of word choice, translators and proofreading editors express a preference for making translations more accessible to TT readers, aligning with the concept of domestication. However, their emphasis on the decision of word choice aims to find compatible vocabulary with the ST, representing another facet of accuracy in translation, that is, an expressiveness in the TT while staying true to the ST. Nevertheless, it’s essential to note that the theme ‘accuracy’ proposed by participants is partly anchored in the ST provided by English journalists and editors, as well as firsthand materials in the IS office. The upcoming theme, ‘Source Text’ will delve into the

translation team's perceptions regarding the source text.

### **4.3 Theme 2: the Source Text - a standard template for reference and revision by translators and proofreading editors**

This section discusses the translators' and proofreading editors' views relevant to the source text of the IS in MSEs in China. There are 5 sub-themes closely associated with the *source text* (ST) from the interview transcripts: information with newsworthy meanings, The primary consideration in the translation process, challenges in the translation in the IS, proofreading editors' editing principles, and text logic.

#### **4.3.1 Information with newsworthy meanings**

At the beginning of the interview, all participants were encouraged to express their opinions and memorable experiences of their previous IS work in MSEs in China. Despite the fact that all interviewees have a clear understanding of the whole IS working mechanism and acknowledge that English is the first and official working language, 'information', as a word repeatedly mentioned, closely connected to the notion of 'information service'. This information refers to the core content with information value in the text provided by the IS and can also be understood as the newsworthy and readable text provided by the IS and used by media outlets.

This category of information typically undergoes a comprehensive process. Journalists recruited by the IS office collect information in English, which is then edited and published in the INFO system—an online platform exclusively accessible to IS staff and media entities who have remunerated the Organizing Committee (OC) for admission. The content is translated into Chinese by translators and subsequently published in the INFO system by proofreading editors. On occasion, this process is reversed, with information collected in Chinese by journalists, published in the INFO system by Chinese proofreading editors, translated into English by translators, and finally published in the INFO system by English editors (see section 2.3.2, and Figure 2.4: The publication process of the bilingual IS in MSEs

in China). As interviewee 3 (translator) mentions:

*My job is to deliver the information, using whatever methods are needed to reach more readers. I believe the focus of the IS is to collect information, and then deliver it. As a translator who is not responsible for collecting information, I want to make sure that the information I deliver is based on the ST, no matter whether the source text is in English or Chinese.*

While other interviewees share this idea that the ST is the model and basis of translation in the IS in China, interviewee 8 (translator) further explains the ‘information’ acquired in the ST:

*What we offer does share similarities with news, in the aspect of providing useful and timely information in the broad sense. Our translation job relies on the ST, which is the beginning and basis of the IS in MSEs in China. Based on my experience, the ST has to contain key information, which is ‘five Ws and one H’ (who, when, where, what, why, how), otherwise it is not an eligible manuscript that could either be translated or published in the system. In other words, the ST determines the quality of our translation work.*

These opinions are in line with the concept and procedure of the IS, which is to provide ‘materials’ for journalists (Jiang, 2014, p.14) and the official working language of the IS, English, which contributes to the composing of the ST, is recognized among translators. It is interesting to note that the interviewees are aware of the similarities between the IS and news due to their common characteristics in providing information, yet they are still capable of seeing the differences. Interviewee 6 (translator) adds that:

*The translation we do in the IS in MSEs in China does bear resemblance to news translation. In my own experience, it should match the ST closely. News always has preferences and sentiments, but what we provide is information, which should be plain*



*and precise. The ST usually contains chunks of information, and the translator's job is to rewrite this information in Chinese without losing its original meaning.*

It is not surprising to find that translators pay so much attention to the ST, as translation is defined as a process of redelivering messages from the ST to the TT (Harliani, 2019, p.122). However, it is unexpected to discover that translators see the ST as information of specific meanings, a model that guides their translation in style of writing and wording which shares some similarities with news, rather than a simple text that needs to be translated and delivered to the audience in the literal meaning, as discussed in the next sub-theme.

#### **4.3.2 The primary consideration in the translation process**

In the interviews, translators and proofreading editors were encouraged to share their ideas and strategies for both the translation and proofreading processes. One of the research questions is to find out whether domestication (a translation strategy that uses a clear, fluid tone to reduce the ST's strangeness for readers of the target language, often more reader-friendly) or foreignization (a translation strategy that keeps the features of the ST, and entails willfully disregarding the rules of the target language in order to maintain its meaning, resulting in a text which is usually less reader-friendly) is used more in translation in the IS in MSEs in China. Despite their diverse ideas on foreignization and domestication, the importance of the ST was put forward constantly from various angles in the interviewee's conversation. Interviewee 1 (translator) comments:

*To discuss the translation rules applied in the translation process is complicated, I believe both domestication and foreignization are used in my translation. What I focus on is the match between my translation and the ST. The official working language (of the IS) is English, I believe the ST stays the truest to the information collected. We have to consider the fact that sometimes the interview is not done in English and the English ST is already a rewrite of the original information. Therefore, I believe that being able to deliver the information from the ST, including the subtle emotions and hints, is really*

*important. I try to fit the ST when translating. For example, if this person speaks playfully, I certainly don't want my translation to be very serious and official. Conversely, if the person's interview is serious, I don't want my translation to be particularly light-hearted.*

An essential point raised by Interviewee 1 is that the English ST may itself be a translation from another language. IS journalists are equipped with multilingual skills to interview athletes from languages considered relatively minor, such as Russian or Japanese, ensuring the comprehensiveness of IS coverage (Chen et al., 2013, p.92). The ST that the translators and proofreading editors read has already gone through a translation process by the journalists and editing process by the English editors if the interview is not held in English. Therefore, the Chinese translation already counts as the third-hand version, so it must maintain an absolute match with the ST in all aspects. This phenomenon, as defined by Belle (2022, p.469), falls under the category of 'indirect translation' in translation studies. There are various theories that discuss indirect translation, and Interviewee 1's suggestion aligns with the idea that indirect translation should adhere to the physical presentation of the translated works (here refer to the 'translated' texts provided by IS journalists that are written in English yet collected in other languages), including format, fonts, layouts, visuals, etc. (Belle, 2022, p.473).

Interestingly, Interviewee 6 (translator) also shares an important note on why it is important to focus on the ST in all forms:

*It is hard to imagine translating speeches like that of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The translations (English to Chinese) on the website of Ministry of Foreign Affairs are relatively blunt, yet understandable. As top translators who work for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, they are surely capable of delivering very fluent Chinese, but there are reasons for not doing so. I suppose that on the one hand, it is to highlight the status of English as a global language because the translation is from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. On the other hand, it is to make a distinction from other genres to ensure the accuracy of the ST. I believe that in the translation of the IS in MSEs in China, we must*

*be faithful to the ST, because the information we offer is not complicated. If the translator modifies or tampers with the ST according to his own interpretation, the information transmitted may be incorrect and violate the ST, as well as the principles of the IS.*

From Interviewee 6's point of view, the various language features of the ST, including the use of words and tone, are purposeful, so the translator cannot make changes at will. This idea echoes the opinions of Interviewee 1.

Interview 9 (translator) states that adhering closely to the ST is important to ensure the quality and accuracy of the translation provided:

*I often keep the ST in parentheses when translating. Because there are so many occasions when I encounter 'untranslatable' information in the ST. Mechanical translation will definitely result in inaccuracy. In many cases, some information can only be expressed in the ST (English). Chinese phrases often appear ambiguous or have polysemy, so if I encounter a special situation, my habit is to directly present the ST in parallel with the translation, so as to avoid readers' misunderstanding of the information.*

As Interview 9 explains, English and Chinese do not necessarily match 100%, and some English cannot be translated accurately. The notion mentioned, 'untranslatable', is an attribute of a text or any utterance in one language that cannot be translated into another (Cui, 2012, p.826). However, 'untranslatable' does not really mean an inability to be translated. It is feasible to translate phrases or full paragraphs that are thought to be impossible to translate because of linguistic incompatibilities (Kashgary, 2010, p.48). In the case of Interviewee 9, the role of the ST is to provide a supplement and explanation. It is a desirable translation method to directly mark the ST as a note in the Chinese translation, also a way of solving the problem of the 'untranslatable'.

These quotes offer unexpected answers to the research question on whether foreignization or domestication translation strategy is used more in the translation process. As is revealed, translators do not tend to use any one of the translation strategies absolutely.

Instead, they focus on the presentation of the ST, in an attempt to use it as a model for the Chinese transcript to minimize information bias, or to maintain its original flavour, or as a supplement to increase the readability of the translation. From another perspective, it could also be assumed that due to the fast-pace and intensity of the IS work, translators tend to focus more on their own obligations in the office, that is to translate the information as quickly as possible. Staying close to the ST could be time-saving and whichever method they apply to ensure the integrity of the ST allows them to avoid faults at work, as translators are not responsible for information collection and content publishing.

### 4.3.3 Challenges in translation in the IS

In this research, many translators mention that there are many challenges and difficulties associated with translation in the IS in MSEs in China. What is intriguing is that when it comes to these challenges, the translators often speak of the ST (whether directly or indirectly), but the proofreading editors do not mention it at all. The translators share the idea that the content and writing of the ST present challenges for their work, but in different respects. Interviewee 1 (translator) says that:

*Although the translation in the IS does not have as many rhetorical and artistic conceptions as literary translation, it is still very difficult. I think the biggest difficulty lies in the requirement for translation speed. Because once the English version is published, the information is shown to the public and is very time-sensitive, so if the ST cannot be translated quickly, it is a work error. Our translation does not allow us to ponder over word choices and aesthetics; we must ensure the accuracy of the information, not to mention that the ST often needs to be explained. So I think the biggest challenge is the speed of the translation process brought by the uniqueness of the ST (English) in terms of content and requirements.*

According to Interviewee 1, the challenges in translation within the IS in MSEs in China revolve around the conflict between ensuring timeliness and maintaining translation

quality. This challenge is understandable as translators face pressure from proofreading editors for either being too slow or submitting unsatisfactory translations. Notably, speed, or the efficiency to complete a translation, is crucial in the IS work. The English information must be disseminated within 10 minutes of the interviews, as per the IOC manual for IS, aligning with the requirement of the IS content being newsworthy (Chen et al., 2013, p.72). The OC recommends that translations be completed within 15 minutes of the English content going live, considering the time-sensitive nature of providing newsworthy information about the competition.

In terms of aiming for accuracy or efficiency, interviewee 9 (Translator) believes that the pursuit of the translation in the IS in China should focus more on expressiveness than being fast, because the presentation of the ST could affect the structure and text flow of the target text (TT):

*I think in the translation of the IS, it is very difficult to make the Chinese translation and the ST (English) completely consistent in language structure and style in a short time. Because in the translation work, you must first understand the ST, and in this reading process, the language logic and style of the ST will definitely have a subtle influence on your translation, that is to say, as a translator, on the premise of being able to read English well, my translation may unconsciously make some expressions that seem inexpressive in Chinese. Or when translating from Chinese to English, some word choices are incorrect. I think being expressive definitely is more important than being fast in the translation process. The structure and way of writing the ST are the most challenging (for translation) because my translation will be affected unconsciously.*

Interviewee 9 emphasizes that the presentation of the ST, such as word flow and clauses, can significantly influence the translator's thought process in producing the target text (TT) input. This aligns with Bode's (2008, p.15) concept that translation is akin to a 'reconstruction' of word orders and patterns. In essence, a translated work may retain certain features of the language of the ST, particularly when the ST is in English. This phenomenon is also captured by the term 'translationese', as proposed by Nida & Taber (1974, p.13), which

carries a negative connotation when evaluating translation works. However, a good translation consists of two stages: a correct understanding of the ST and a full expression of the TT and ‘translationese’ is normally the result of the failing to be articulate in the TT (Shen, 2018, p.204). It is interesting to discover that translators’ awareness of the impact of the ST on the TT, rather than their thoughts on how to improve the quality of the TT. Yet, this shifts in translators’ perceptions in the ST and TT can also reflect their potential preferences on domestication and foreignization.

Interviewee 10 (translator) presents a comprehensive summary of the translation in the IS in China:

*Sports is the main content of the translation we offer. This requires us to have a sufficient understanding of sports-related knowledge. Sports, like economics or law, is also an industry that requires a very high level of professional knowledge. If someone is not familiar with the sport itself, it will be very challenging to do a good translation. This is like a translating a legal document. The ST is in English, and often written by professional sports journalists who have worked in the IOC for many years. However, in China, there are very few full-time translators who understand sports, so even if we have done enough training before the competition, the technical terms appearing in the ST and the oral expressions between some athletes are very difficult for us to comprehend and translate. I certainly consider the translation in the IS in MSEs in China belongs to the category ESP (English for Specific Purposes), because the ST is not something we usually encounter as a translator. And this is not only reflected in the process of translating from English to Chinese, it is even more challenging to translate from Chinese to English, because as Chinese nationals, our English is surely weaker than our Chinese.*

This excerpt reflects that the nature of the ST frequently presents challenges for translators. The content of the ST is so professionalized that it sets a higher bar for translators’ work. It is revealed that sports terms, slang, and colloquial expressions present universal challenges for the translators due to the unique context of the translation in the IS in China

and the sports industry. However, it is not out of the ordinary to find that translators consider translation in the IS in China as a kind of ESP (English for Specific Purposes), which is used to describe study or research in the specific type of English they may require, a more abstract form of the language that is less reliant on its immediate environment for coherence (Salmani-Nodoushan, 2020, p.248). This suggests that translation within the IS in China differs significantly from more common forms of translation, such as literature or document translation. Consequently, even experienced translators may find content within the IS challenging to tackle.

Interviewee 12 (proofreading editor) supports this idea, saying:

*What we do is definitely ESP, even though we provide information that is simple, plain, and easy to read. The translation process for dealing with this information is complex, because there are too many sports terms, there are various terms for various sports, and sometimes there will be overlaps, so we need to keep checking. At the same time, in view of the fact that our interviews are often after the athletes' competitions, no matter whether they win or lose, they are generally not at ease, and the quotes we get are often out of the scope of normal conversation. The ST (English) is just a faithful retelling, but this is a challenge to our translation and proofreading work. Therefore, it is still necessary to have enough sports knowledge and industry skills to complete this job.*

Interviewee 12 reinforces the idea of IS translation being ESP. Additionally, he highlights the complexity of sports terms, not only in terms of intricate meanings but also in the sense that the same vocabulary may carry different meanings in different sports. This observation aligns with the perspectives of Yang (2015, p.65) and Zhao (2019, p.27) (as mentioned in section 2.4.4). It becomes evident that translators aim to preserve the information and writing style of the ST as much as possible, without significant modification or editing during the translation process. This is in line with the previous sub-theme, indicating that whatever translation strategies are used, the aim is to echo the ST as much as possible. Both interviewee 1 and interviewee 10 emphasize the challenges in the translation in the IS in China by making comparisons with literature and legal translation. One explanation

for this comparison may be that these translators and proofreaders are not sports-specific translators. Professional sports translators are neither trained in universities nor are they in demand on the labour market in China. Because of this, even though these translators and proofreading editors have a lot of experience and have translated in other fields, sports-specific terms may provide a challenge due to their limited preparation time. The necessity for translation in the market is also primarily driven by legal and literary fields. Besides, due to the seriousness of the MSE and the one-time publish feature (unretractable) of the contents, translators and proofreading editors are always under pressure at work, worrying about making mistakes.

#### **4.3.4 Proofreading editors' editing principles**

Proofreading editors form the last link in the IS in China, and the final issuers of all the Chinese content. They undertake multiple roles such as proofreading the translation, text editing, and content filtering (Lv & Guo, 2022, p.28). When studying whether proofreading editors have undertaken the role of gate-keeping and how they might do this, the data from this study suggests that the revisions and improvements made by proofreading editors to the translators' works are more or less based on the ST as reference. As interviewee 13 (proofreading editors) states:

*I have emphasized countless times to translators that our translation will always maintain a symmetry of information and be faithful to the original meaning of the ST. If the ST (English) uses more intense or emotional words, we must also use matching words in Chinese at this level. Because the working language of the IS is always English, each part of the English content published should be respected. Therefore, our translation must be faithful to the style and language characteristics of the ST. In my opinion, many translators' work is too 'Chinese' and loses some of the language features in the ST. What I am discussing is not the application of domestication or foreignization, but the symmetry of language style and expression in two languages.*



According to interviewee 13, some translators erase many features from the ST (English) in their work, and the translation is too Chinese-oriented, which she views as unacceptable. Viewed in another way, this shows that some proofreading editors do not appreciate the domestication translation strategy, and even see it as accidental or unprofessional behaviour to some extent.

Meanwhile, Interviewee 14 (proofreading editor) mentions the necessity of using the ST as complementary material for the translation:

*I think I agree with the principle of equivalence. It's meaningless to talk about domestication and foreignization away from the ST. If a new concept (in English) comes out, for which we do not have a corresponding one in Chinese, I'm afraid we can only explain it, keep the ST, and supplement it with pinyin annotation or direct English attachment, because the ultimate purpose of the IS is to deliver information. My habit is to ensure that the Chinese translation must have the principle of conveying the same information as the English translation when proofreading.*

What interviewee 14 states matches what the translators have suggested previously in terms of using the ST as a form of explanation. Interviewee 14 also proposes the notion of equivalence, meaning to reach a kind of 'sameness' between the ST and the TT (Panou, 2013, p.2). This suggests that not simply the language, but also the respective cultures must be thoroughly understood (Xiang, 2011, p.169). In the case of translation in the IS, this equivalence refers to the delivery of the exact information in both languages.

Surprisingly, Interviewee 11 (proofreading editor) suggests that the ST should be the only criterion for editing the translations in proofreading work, in consideration of the fact that proofreading editors are the ones who make the decision to publish.

*In a sense, any translation script that a proofreading editor gets is actually a second-hand thing. What the IS is required to provide is source information in two languages, which will be relatively rough and fact-oriented, but the most important thing is that what we deliver must match the original, first-hand information. Our translation*

*work is attached to the information itself, so in my proofreading editing, the ST (English) is absolutely the source, and the translation (from the translator) is actually something I can use for reference. Some proofreading editors may quickly scan the translation, and directly make an embellishment to it if there are no obvious errors. But I am not like that. My editing principle is to form a translation of the ST in my mind, and then make comparisons to the translation and edit it. I don't fully trust the work of the translators. All my work is based on the ST, because I am the final contributor and I should be responsible for my work.*

Interviewee 11 makes a very interesting point about the ‘trustworthiness’ of translators’ work. The origin of this distrust lies in the identity of the proofreading editor, that is, the final issuer of the Chinese content, who needs to be held accountable for mistakes. Essentially interviewee 11 ‘borrows’ the translator's translation to help herself do a ‘secondary translation’ of the ST. This is indeed rare in the working behaviour of the proofreading editor. This might improve the faithfulness of the translation to the ST, but it is debatable whether this behaviour is acceptable among other proofreading editors due to its complexity and time consumption. In most translations, the aim of proofreading is to edit, sort out and unify the use of words and language habits on the premise of checking the correctness of the translators’ work (Lv & Guo, 2022, p.27). The editing of proofreading editors and the translation strategies being applied in IS in China show a lot of overlap in terms of the understanding and utilizing of the ST. It is also worth mentioning that proofreading editors do not have a fixed preference for the use of domestication or foreignization strategies.

#### **4.3.5 Text logic**

Before discussing what the interviewees refer to as ‘text logic’, to define ‘logic’ is necessary. Normally, logic means the capacity for thought and rational inquiry, which refers to the ability of people to reason correctly most of the time and to point out flaws in the reasoning of others when they cannot, or the ability to draw consistent conclusions from given information (Barker-Plummer et al., 2011, p.1). In translation, logic has been defined as the

study of sound thinking and what makes sense when things happen in a particular order (Mossakowski et al., 2009, p.96). However, what the translators and proofreading editors suggest as ‘text logic’ emphasizes more the importance of keeping the integrity of the information of the ST and the way of delivering such information in a proper and acceptable way. As interviewee 6 (translator) states:

*I say that there is not any special strategy when translating. But I pay more attention to the coherence of the text, that is to say, the logic of the translation must be consistent with the ST. I assume translators can naturally accept the logic when reading the English content, but after translating it into Chinese, this logic may not be accurate, and the information will often be misinterpreted, or readers will not be able to understand the key points. Especially when there are a lot of juxtapositions, it is acceptable to use a bunch of ‘and’ for English conjunctions, but in Chinese it will seem very cumbersome, so I will write them in numbers instead, which is clearer, and it is just a change in the form of conjunctions. The changes in the translation are still consistent with the ST, without information asymmetry.*

Obviously, interviewee 6's logical processing of the ST centers on the presentation of the text, trying to split complex content into simple and clear information. This is very much in line with the requirements of journalism, which is concise, unambiguous, and organized (Mulatifu, 2020, p.95).

Interviewee 9 (translator) believes that the text logic offered in the ST contributes to the translation work and should be followed strictly:

*Many times when I read the source text (English), I find that the English editors have already sorted out the information. Sometimes the language presentation of the interviewee of the ST does not have any information value, that is to say, it is not as logical and organized as we usually see in the news, and there will be many random additions and revisions, and also some slips of the tongue. Although the information is fragmented, there is actually a logic inside. In my view, the greatest value of the ST*

*(English) for the translators is that it has sorted out a bunch of messy information into logical and readable information. As a translator, of course, the translation work should be carried out according to the logic of the information presented in the ST. It is easier and makes more sense.*

Interviewee 9 recognizes the importance of the ST providing valuable information, that is, the ST organizes and arranges the interview content. This may be because Interviewee 9 has worked as a journalist in the IS, and that experience contributes to a deeper understanding of the ST.

As a proofreading editor, interviewee 15 also supports the idea of keeping the transcripts on track with the ST, further indicating the importance of the ST in guiding the translators' translation:

*All content published by English editors have a tight logic inside. This logic lies not only in putting tons of information in order, but also in the progressive logic between each question and answer. What I often see in my proofreading work is that the translator's translation is not accurate enough. In fact, the lack of understanding of the logic of the ST leads to translation errors, especially the frequent translation errors of pronouns. Because sometimes the content has a background (context), and the 'it' or 'this' mentioned below actually refers to what has previously been said. Although most of the time, English editors will explain these pronouns in the form of brackets to avoid misreading, sometimes they do not because the reference is obvious, but our translators still misread them. This phenomenon is down to the poor comprehension of the logic of the ST, resulting in error.*

This quote from interviewee 15 matches previous studies in the translation of English pronouns. As Yao (2019, p.76) points out, to prevent repetition, English has a lot of pronouns, while in Chinese, pronouns are frequently implicit in the content of the phrase. The Chinese language has fewer pronouns than English, and they are not as widely used in everyday speech. Not to mention that 'it' can be used in English not just as a pronoun but also to

highlight sentence structures, as a formal subject, or as a form object, thus it is used more frequently in the ST than in the translation.

Interviewee 16 (proofreading editor) points out the difficulty in keeping the text logic inside the ST in the Chinese translation due to the natural habit of language presentation:

*In my opinion, the logic of English is always more rigorous. I really like that English editors often use brackets to explain some unclear or incomplete quotes from the athletes in their works. For example, when an athlete says 'I won it last year', the editors will definitely explain which competition this 'it' refers to in brackets. This additional information is the logic of the ST, and they complement each other. Without logic, no matter how much information you have, it is worthless. However, the Chinese language is relatively scattered compared to other languages, and there are usually many hidden meanings in what everyone says. So I think it is very difficult to bring the meticulous logic and information of the ST into our Chinese translation.*

Interviewee 16 believes that text logic denotes a full display of information, which means stringing information together and making sense of it. This reflects the definition of 'logic' proposed by Barker-Plummer et al. (2011). The concept of 'text logic' in this context refers to the practice of enhancing the comprehension of the ST by adding comments and additional information. This approach appears to involve incorporating necessary information to connect different pieces of information and create a more readable text. This aligns with the idea expressed by interviewee 9 regarding how the presentation of the ST, including word flow and clauses, can influence the translator's thinking in the TT input. Interviewee 16 also compares the language characteristics of Chinese and English. Without a doubt, cultural differences will bring about language differences.

However, to discuss the differences between English and Chinese, it is essential to delve into comparative linguistics. To simplify, Liu (2013, p.283) indicates that Chinese is characterized as an analytical language (breaking up meanings into individual words) that lacks morphological changes. Grammatical meaning in Chinese is primarily conveyed through word order and particles, which are flexible, vivid, and expressive. In contrast,

English is considered a mix of analytical and synthetic language (joining multiple concepts into each word) with relatively fixed word order. English employs morphological changes to alter parts of speech, allowing for the formation of sentences conveying similar meanings. Chinese, lacking such morphological changes, faces difficulty expressing the same meaning through various sentence patterns.

This divergence leads to the necessity to modify parts of speech to smoothly convey the original meaning in translation between English and Chinese. According to Zhang, J. (2012, p.33-48), English proficiently utilizes the three major grammatical methods—morphological changes, word order, and function words—particularly evident in compound or complex sentences. Conversely, Chinese predominantly relies on word order and function words, employing shorter sentences and clauses arranged in chronological and logical order.

In news reporting, the contrast between the compound structure of English and the concise nature of Chinese becomes more pronounced. Given the inherent seriousness of news content, factual accuracy without ambiguity is paramount (Holland, 2013, p.333). This places higher demands on analytical languages such as Chinese. Consequently, when translating from English to Chinese, division (breaking down a lengthy English sentence into several shorter sentences in Chinese to enhance clarity and ensure that the logic and meaning are conveyed effectively and comprehensively) is a common approach employed to prevent confusion of meaning or the occurrence of ambiguity or ‘translationese’ resulting from the stacking of vocabulary and logic (Lian, 1983, p.117). This can be seen as a compromise with the inherently the ‘analytic’ and ‘scattered’ nature of Chinese.

At the same time, according to the author's own experience, Chinese athletes are more ‘cautious’ when interviewed. This is due to the operating mechanism of Chinese sports, which is ‘JuGuo TiZhi’ (举国体制) (see chapter 2.1.3), and the fact that athletes cannot (or dare not) speak freely during interviews, or carefully dropping hints concerning some censored information that everyone is aware of, which explains why interviewee 16 finds that the responses of Chinese athletes are ‘relatively scattered’.

It can be seen that in the translation of the IS, the so-called ‘text logic’ mainly refers to the coherence of the ST, the context in the translation and the ability to process corresponding words during the translation process. Both translators and proofreading editors acknowledged

the importance of the text logic of the ST (English), although the two have different perspectives on their utilization. Text logic poses a big challenge for translators, mainly in terms of whether the translator's understanding of the English text logic will bring about information deviation in their translations. As for proofreading editors, the logic of the ST is a model for reference, to supplement the translations and use to correct errors. The work of proofreading is more complicated, because it is not only necessary to understand the literal logic of the ST, but also to transfer this logic to the Chinese translation without error.

#### **4.3.6 Summary of theme 2**

Participants in this study recognize that the *source text* (ST) under consideration extends beyond its literal meaning. While both translators and proofreading editors appreciate the information in the ST, they place different emphasis on the importance of various elements such as text flow, structure, logic, special terms, and wording in its presentation. This phenomenon may be attributed to the absence of translators and proofreading editors during the information collection process. Their emphasis on the ST is reasonable as it marks the initial phase of a translation endeavor. The main challenge for translators lies in aligning their approach with the principle of the translation being homologous to the ST in various aspects, proposed by proofreading editors. This adherence to the ST is seen as a means of maintaining precision, upholding ethical standards in translation work, and preventing potential disputes. Despite the significant role of translation in China's IS work, there is a collective awareness among translators and proofreading editors of the English text being the official and original product of the IS team, and they demonstrate respect for this aspect.

### **4.4 Theme 3: Sensitive Information - more than just sensitive in China**

Several studies have highlighted the fact that the IS office in China operates as a

temporary news agency exclusively catering to the needs of the MSEs and their respective Organizing Committees (OCs) (Jiang, 2014, p.14). The content generated by the IS is considered a ‘semi-finished product’ of news, sharing similarities with news in terms of being politically correct, informative, and engaging (Lv & Guo, 2022, p.27). It is crucial to establish the definition of ‘sensitive information’ at the outset of this section. Drawing from Pan (2014, p.554) and Zhang et al. (2019, p.582), sensitive information can be broadly understood as any information that has the potential to cause negative impact or conflict for the host country/city. Additionally, information that violates human ethics, public order, or good morals may also be deemed sensitive or inappropriate, as discussed in section 2.4.3. This definition provides a framework for understanding and evaluating what constitutes sensitive information within the context of IS translation. One of the key research questions in this study is what translators and proofreading editors do presumably as gatekeepers in their translation work in the IS. To investigate this, all participants are asked about the measures they take to avoid publishing information that could potentially harm the image of the MSE or the OC. The findings suggest that both translators and proofreading editors adopt certain behaviours to ensure that the content they translated and published do not get misinterpreted or misused by the media. The theme *sensitive information* emerged with four sub-themes: translators' proactive efforts to avoid errors at work, proofreading editors' revisions to ensure the political neutrality of IS content, China as a special case for gatekeeping, and the OC's role as an influence on the IS's work.

#### **4.4.1 Translators' proactive efforts to improve work efficiency**

Translators encounter the published English content ahead of the proofreading editors. The research results show that translators all feel it necessary to filter certain ‘inappropriate’ information in their translation. However, the reasons why translators omit, edit or adapt inappropriate information are different from those of the proofreading editors.

Interviewee 3 (translator) refers to the kind of information that needed to be omitted or edited:



*During our training, the importance of being politically sensitive is repeatedly stressed. The work manual provides clear guidelines on what we should avoid, so I am especially careful when translating. I recognize that people have different values, which can touch on issues such as religious beliefs, territorial sovereignty, international situations, personal attacks, and dissatisfaction with referees and competitions. I recall a previous translation where an athlete became emotional and used unpleasant language. If I were to translate such language accurately and submit it for proofreading, I might face criticism. However, I believe it's not appropriate to alter what others have said. Therefore, if the information is not relevant to the main content, or if it's not important, I will omit it. Translating such information would be a waste of time and could result in unnecessary criticism. For instance, in an interview with a gold medalist, the focus should be on their feelings about winning the gold medal and their perception of the competition.*

Interviewee 3 emphasizes the importance of handling sensitive information and outlines the skills required for translators, including the need for judgment and creativity. This aligns with Fu's (2019, p.46) concept of 'The Autonomy of Translator Action', which underscores the translator's initiative and creativity in their work. A key aspect of this concept is the notion of 'unhandling' in translation, suggesting that it may be more effective not to translate certain parts of the text (Fu, 2019, p.51). In the context of the IS, Interviewee 3's approach to 'unhandling' involves filtering and removing sensitive information to enhance the article's readability and her translation efficiency. However, when dealing with articles of minimal news value, translators need to assess the importance of translating the content beforehand. Without proper selection and judgment, fully translating every English article within the IS could be seen as an inefficient use of effort (Lv & Guo, 2022, p.29) as well as carrying the potential for reflecting badly upon the translator. This highlights the need for strategic decision-making in the translation process.

An additional topic that deserves discussion is the editing and deletion of quotes. According to Wilstein (2002, p.99), the use of quotes in sports writing should follow the principle of accuracy: direct quotes are appropriate if the interviewee's words are clear and

precise, while indirect quotes can be used if the original quotations are not ideal. However, even if there are small grammatical errors or vocabulary mistakes, they should not be revised when applying quotes in the news reports. Jiang (2012, p.46) states that in the context of the IS, interview content, including quotes, should be used selectively for newsworthiness, and only three or four newsworthy quotes are appreciated. Therefore, these ideas support the behaviour that quotes from interviews cannot be edited, but they can be selectively used. Nonetheless, it's worth exploring how translators determine the newsworthiness of the information or if their judgments are shared.

Interviewee 4 (translator) provides an insight into why certain information should be omitted from translations and how he efficiently handles inappropriate information. The interviewee emphasizes the importance of marking information that could be harmful or offensive to the target audience, as a prompt for the proofreading editors. By doing so, the translators and proofreading editors are expected to work more efficiently together.

*The core of the IS work lies in sports, and information that is politically involved or irrelevant to sports or the MSE may not be crucial. It may be appropriate to reduce such information as the focus should be on sports, and the responsibility for selecting information to translate lies in marking them, not in the selection. If I encounter political issues, I will definitely mark them in my translation. As a translator, my job is to deliver the translation quickly and completely, and I am not qualified to publish any content. Thus, I will leave this work to the proofreading editors. This is not a lot of work, and if everyone abides by their job responsibilities, it will reduce a lot of burden on the staff themselves. For instance, though the sensitive information has not been fully handled, if the translators mark it, it saves some work of the proofreading editors.*

The point made by Interviewee 4 has several important facets: a) In the work of the IS, information that is not related to sports and the MSE can be processed. This aligns with what interviewee 10 mentions in the previous theme: *source text*, that is, the ST is characterized by sports terms and data written by specialists. interviewee 4's opinion stresses that such sports and MSE-relevant information is difficult to translate and requires a high level of expertise; b)

The job of the translator is only to mark inappropriate information as a reminder so that the proofreading editors can modify and delete it. In contrast to the opinion of Interviewee 3, Interviewee 4 does not voluntarily delete English content but rather selectively translates it. If certain parts are inappropriate or difficult to translate, he marks them as such and leaves the task of addressing them to the proofreading editors. This approach allows the translator to focus on the more manageable parts of the content, thus making the translation process more efficient. It can also be seen that interviewee 4 does not want to participate too much in this gatekeeping work. Nonetheless, interviewee 4 stresses the importance of delivering complete, accurate, and timely translations; c) The IS staff appear to share values that guide them in filtering out inappropriate information when translating, proofreading, and publishing content. These values come in part from the training received before undertaking IS work, and can also be seen as an influence of the general environment, a self-protection mechanism or a kind of obedience to the government's promotion and communication work. Specifically, since politics is a compulsory course from elementary school to post-graduate level in China, those who are highly-educated, such as translators and proofreading editors, will be highly attuned to how to maintain 'political correctness'. At work, everyone performs their own duties, and no one wants to cause unnecessary troubles to themselves or to the team due to work mistakes. This is consistent with Lv and Guo's finding (2022, p.29), that is, the translator's behaviour in the translation work of the IS has a strong pattern: employees are extremely involved in their work, and share clear translation goals.

In this study, the majority of translators acknowledge that they often omit or mark inappropriate information as part of their professional responsibilities. However, the views of one interviewee regarding the handling of sensitive information differs from those of other translators.

Interviewee 9 (translator) states:

*As a translator, my job is focused solely on the task of delivering accurate translations. It is not within my job responsibilities to check for inappropriate information. In fact, if I were to overly concern myself with sensitive information, it would negatively impact my efficiency, as well as that of the entire team. The sheer volume of content that translators*

*process further limits our ability to scrutinize every detail of each text. I don't care about politics or other issues. While I recognize the importance of being politically sensitive, my role is simply to deliver information without bias. Our training emphasizes the need to avoid inappropriate information, but this is primarily the responsibility of the journalists who write the source texts and the proofreading editors who publish the final content. Political stances, conflicting values and ideas are not within my scope of consideration.*

Interviewee 9 stands out in this research as the only translator who refrains from taking any action (other than faithful translation) on sensitive information during the translation process. Despite being aware of its importance, Interviewee 9 opts not to treat sensitive information differently due to the intensive nature of the work and its impact on efficiency. He stresses that sensitive information is collected by journalists and published by proofreading editors, with translators not involved in either process. This clear division of responsibilities aligns with the structural organization of the IS, where each job position has a specific role, and the translator's role is primarily focused on translation. It is interesting to note that Interviewee 9 understands the importance of avoiding sensitive information but chooses not to take any action. This decision might stem from a desire to emphasize that his reluctance to handle sensitive information is not due to a lack of awareness about its importance but rather a result of the designated work responsibilities within the IS structure. There may also be a consideration that he could face criticism for not handling sensitive information well. However, his viewpoint also underscores the significance he places on translation speed and work efficiency, which are key concerns in his role. Hence, to balance the various aspects inherent in translation work, Interviewee 9 prioritizes speed and efficiency, choosing to expedite the translation process while neglecting direct involvement with sensitive information.

#### 4.4.2 Proofreading editors' revisions to ensure the political neutrality of IS content

Proofreading editors play a critical role in the creation of the entire Chinese content of the IS, assuming significant responsibility for ensuring its accuracy and comprehensiveness. This position demands a high level of proficiency in various areas. Beyond basic Chinese reading and writing skills, proofreading editors must also possess advanced English language proficiency and senior translation skills. Given the international attention garnered by the MSE and the global audience of the IS, proofreading editors also assume a gatekeeping role, carefully considering the appropriateness of information that is included in the publication (Lv & Guo, 2022, p.29).

Interviewee 11 (proofreading editor) expresses her opinion on why it is necessary to filter any politically sensitive information:

*The handling of sensitive information is crucial in the field of sports journalism. Regardless of whether the sensitive information is disclosed intentionally or inadvertently by the interviewee, I will avoid it. The MSE is a high-profile public event with political implications, despite centering on sports. As information providers for media outlets, we should focus on delivering sports-related content. Any information related to politics would not align with our role and responsibilities. Additionally, we must consider a scenario that if we publish whatever information we have collected, the IS may be used by athletes or other interviewees with ulterior motives to express their political opinions and gain public attention. This is an undesirable outcome. As such, I believe in maintaining a neutral stance. I will omit or replace any information that is insulting, degrading, or likely to cause conflict between parties, opting for softer language that can deliver the same message without creating controversy.*

Interviewee 11's viewpoint aligns with that of other interviewees, emphasizing the focus of the IS on sports-related content. However, she introduces an additional dimension by emphasizing the importance of neutrality in the translation. Neutrality has long been a guiding

principle in the Chinese media to avoid involvement in public opinion conflicts and conflicts of interest that may be detrimental to the media outlet (Zhong et al., 2011, p.2). This approach also aligns with Zhang et al.'s (2019, p.60) suggestion that official media or news agencies should pay attention to potential ideological and value conflicts when dealing with audiences with diverse identities, values, ideologies, or educational backgrounds. Interviewee 11 interprets the need for neutrality from a distinct perspective – to prevent the IS platform from being utilized by individuals or groups with conflicting interests or values. This perspective suggests that the risk of using the IS for political gain is not limited to the interviewees themselves but may extend to external groups seeking to leverage the platform. Interviewee 11's viewpoint underscores the importance of maintaining the IS's impartiality and preventing it from becoming a tool for political manipulation. However, it raises the question of who these 'others' might be and whether they are individuals or groups that do not align with the values of proofreading editors or have conflicting interests. The concept of 'impartiality' in IS work is theoretically rooted in the unbiased and truthful delivery of the MSE information. Yet, achieving such impartiality is challenging. The notion of impartiality itself is subjective, and determining from which perspective true impartiality arises remains open for discussion. Translators and proofreading editors may also struggle to be entirely unbiased when contemplating and editing sensitive information, introducing a layer of subjectivity to the pursuit of impartiality.

Interviewee 13 (proofreading editor) supports the idea of staying neutral, and offers some reflection on the need to redact inappropriate information:

*Sports should not be used as a tool for politics; it does not serve any group or cause. Instead, sports should be enjoyed simply for the happiness and display of athleticism. When dealing with sensitive information, there are always more solutions than keeping it or deleting it. The content I have published is politically neutral because I don't want to get in trouble. I don't want to explain to others that this is what the interviewee said, which is extra work for me. I consider my revision an improvement because I am actually helping the interviewee correct his/her expressions in a subtle and more acceptable way. No matter whether the information is inappropriate at the political level, language level,*

*or includes other cultural taboos, as long as there is something inappropriate, it is still necessary for us (proofreading editors) to fix it. In my mind, translation is a job of word processing. As proofreading editors, we first have to deal with whether the text is correct, then whether the text is appropriate in Chinese, and whether we can further optimize the expression of the translators, so why can't I fix inappropriate information?*

Interviewee 13's perspective is intriguing as she aligns translation work with editing, framing the processing of sensitive information as a type of text processing that can enhance the final product. Her approach is reminiscent of the concept previously discussed as 'transediting', a practice acknowledged in China that fully showcases the translator's creative writing and editing skills (Chang & Yang, 2015, p.17). While her viewpoint may seem unconventional, it aligns well with the responsibilities of proofreading editors in the IS. In her view, political neutrality is essential to avoid potential conflicts and reduce workload. Here, neutrality refers to making sensitive information more palatable by adjusting the wording, softening the tone, or removing the obvious expression of political views. Interviewee 13's perspective highlights the practical considerations involved in processing sensitive information within the IS. By integrating translation and editing practices, the goal is to produce content that is not only accurate but also politically neutral and acceptable to a diverse audience, ultimately avoiding unnecessary trouble or disputes.

Interviewee 14 (proofreading editor) gives a comprehensive summary of what should be considered as 'inappropriate information' in the IS in MSEs in China, and he further explains why proofreading editors need to be 'careful':

*In my work, I prioritize three aspects: accuracy of the information, language fluency, and adherence to the cultural and political backgrounds of the target language. However, regardless of censorship considerations of the event itself, my focus is always on sports. In the process of translation or proofreading, I try my best to convey the content related to the event itself, especially given that censorship has become more serious over the last decade. This is also a basic requirement we have for journalists in the IS who are responsible for collecting information. They should focus on the competition and avoid*

*politically sensitive questions. If there is a deviation in your focus, which leads to the collected information being unqualified or too politically sensitive, I do not see the necessity to translate or publish it at all. Although the likelihood of encountering sensitive information is low for our proofreading editors, we still need to make sure that the text is politically neutral. For example, I once translated the word 'despise' as '不喜欢' (don't like) rather than using the word 'dislike'. Both words have negative connotations towards the object, and readers can still understand the meaning without using a stronger word.*

Interviewee 14 highlights an important concept: censorship. This phenomenon has existed since the founding of the Republic of China in 1949. Li (2021, p.93) notes that according to Marxist theory, the media should serve as the eyes and ears of the ruling party, a concept that is emphasized in Chinese journalism and communication textbooks. Most of the media in China are operated by the government, and public opinion is guided and shaped by the government's instruction (Xu & Albert, 2014, p.2). Under President Xi's leadership, media and public opinion have been subject to stricter control (Xu & Albert, 2014, p.3). Interviewee 14's observations about the gradual weakening of media freedom in China appear to be in line with this. While the IS office staff may not explicitly mention censorship, it is likely that they are aware of its existence. Interviewee 14's example of using 'do not like' instead of 'dislike' illustrates how proofreading editors carefully avoid sensitive information, even steering away from strongly negative vocabulary in their work, presenting a phenomenon of 'over-cautious' to some extent. This cautious approach indicates the sensitivity around certain topics and the need to exercise discretion in language choices. Moreover, Interviewee 14 emphasizes the importance of avoiding sensitive information during the information-gathering process for IS journalists. This suggests that proofreading editors are compelled to maintain neutrality to steer clear of any sensitive information that might compromise their position within the IS. It also highlights a division of responsibility, with the journalists collecting information and the proofreading editors ensuring that the final content aligns with the required standards of political neutrality and sensitivity.



#### 4.4.3 China as a special case for gatekeeping

As mentioned earlier in this section, sensitive or inappropriate information typically pertains to topics such as politics, military affairs, religious conflicts, ethnic issues, and other values-related matters. Conversely, information related to sports events and the MSE is generally considered non-sensitive. During this research, notably, several interviewees mention China multiple times while discussing gatekeeping, emphasizing the need for greater caution when dealing with sensitive information related to national athletes, competitions, the country's status, news systems, and public opinion guidance. This highlights the importance of considering the specific context when handling sensitive information.

Interviewee 7 (translator) delivers his opinion on why it is significant to avoid sensitive information in the translation process:

*Different countries may have varying values, which means that content that seems acceptable in one place may not be suitable in another. For instance, what is common overseas may be more sensitive in China, so some content may need to be revised. As a translator, my role is to act as a bridge between the media and the MSE, ensuring that my message is accurately interpreted by my audience. It is true that sports have no borders, but athletes have borders, and competitive sports also have borders. Especially in China, I think the performance of the athletes, the feelings of the audience, and other people's views on this MSE are largely related to the political performance of the host city. For the host city, it is amenable to organize the MSE well, and it is a dereliction of duty if it is not done well. Whenever I encounter sensitive information, I consider how it will impact my country and the host city from a Chinese perspective.*

Interviewee 7 highlights the importance of avoiding sensitive information when translating as a Chinese national. According to Fu (2019, p.51), a translator's behaviour is primarily based on their intention, which can be influenced by their own will or the will of others. In the context of the MSE, translators are often motivated by a strong desire for achievement, a sense of mission, and patriotism (Lv & Guo, 2022). In the case of Interviewee

7, her behaviour suggests a strong commitment to the success of the MSE, with a prioritization of her identity as a Chinese national. However, it is worth discussing whether such behaviour is too subjective and whether it may result in an exaggeration of the influence of Chinese athletes at the expense of reporting fairly on athletes from other countries. Additionally, it raises questions about the appropriateness and impartiality of translators.

Interviewee 12 (proofreading editor) explains the importance of handling sensitive information with care on a larger scale:

*Understandably, any country hosting an MSE would aim to deliver positive news as much as possible. Given the significant labour and material resources required to organize such an event, it is only natural to expect that the entire operation will be executed flawlessly. Consequently, some inappropriate information may be handled to ensure that the event's overall image remains positive. Moreover, in the case of China, there is a strong emphasis on involving the entire citizenry in MSE-relevant activities, from early publicity work to the overall operation and planning during the event, as well as post-event summaries and commendations. Such activities serve to guide public opinion, and it is natural to expect all the MSE-relevant news that reaches the public to be positive. Additionally, information about Chinese athletes is likely to be positive and uplifting to cater to the patriotic sentiments of the Chinese population. As the competition is being held in China, it is natural to expect that the public will root for Chinese athletes, and hence, the information published about them would be generally positive to ensure everyone remains happy.*

Interviewee 12 explains how to circumvent sensitive information from the perspective of organizing an MSE, to reach the political significance of hosting an MSE. Firstly, the success of a country's athletes can boost national pride (Kobierecki, 2013, p.60). Secondly, hosting an MSE can improve the city's popularity or change its image (Malfas et al., 2004, p.214). Lastly, Interviewee 12 emphasizes China's unique approach, which involves citizen participation and public opinion orientation to enhance patriotism and national cohesion (Levermore, 2004, p.17). This idea could be seen as a continuation of China's sports policy, using sports as a

mean to achieve political goals (see section 2.2.3). From Interviewee 12's perspective, controlling news materials from a macro-level viewpoint is crucial for managing sensitive information. His focus is on publicity and information planning, which aligns with the goals of the country, government, or organization. However, one could argue that Interviewee 12's approach does not centre on 'providing news materials', but rather on achieving the desired outcomes.

Interviewee 16 (proofreading editor) offers another interesting view on a specific case discussed previously by translators and other proofreading editors. Here is an example:

Figure 4.1: an example of flash quotes discussed in the research

HANGZHOU, Dec 11. - Comments from Katinka HOSSZU (HUN) after winning the gold medal in the women's 400m individual medley at the Hangzhou Olympic and Expo Centre on Tuesday.

**Katinka HOSSZU (HUN) - gold**

**On the challenges she faced in 2018:**

"I got divorced and I changed my coach [also her husband]. That's what happened this year.

"I obviously had a tough year and a lot of changes. I had a new coach so I'm happy to be back in the shape I know I have been in the past five years."

The most intriguing aspect of this flash quote is that the English editor uses brackets to annotate a piece of information, which sparks a heated discussion among the proofreading editors on whether the content in the brackets needs to be kept in the TT. Some proofreading editors argue that the information within the parentheses should be retained as it connects two seemingly unrelated pieces of information, namely 'coach' and 'husband'. Others contend that the information is irrelevant to the competition and is not mentioned by the interviewee, and therefore should be omitted.

However, Interviewee 16 offers a fascinating perspective on this case, one that could be described as a 'double standard':

*This type of information should be handled on a case-by-case basis. Personally, I would choose to retain the information in brackets as it is significant to me and the athlete*

*being interviewed is not Chinese. However, if the athlete were Chinese, I would likely remove the information in brackets. In China, athletes are closely tied to the image and honour of the country within our sports system, and their private lives are often big news. Additionally, in traditional Chinese culture, 'divorce' is viewed as negative news and is generally not discussed publicly by athletes or the media.*

The perspective of Interviewee 16 highlights a cultural difference between the East and the West, where even the word 'divorce' is considered sensitive information in the former. However, this 'double standard' is only applicable to Chinese athletes, and reflects a conditioned reflex to cultural sensitivity. The interviewee emphasizes the particularity of Chinese athletes within the 'country-supported' sports system, equating individual athletes with the image of the entire competition team or even the country. It is debatable whether this idea is fair to the athletes. Secondly, whether this kind of 'special care' for Chinese athletes can be regarded as a kind of preconceived idea of a proofreading editor is controversial as well. While the word 'divorce' may not be inappropriate sensitive information in general, Interviewee 16 contextualizes it within the Chinese culture, where it becomes sensitive information. This highlights the need to define sensitive information within the work of the IS and whether 'double standards' or 'multiple standards' are worth advocating. It is also significant to consider whether the gate-keeping behaviour of proofreading editors can sometimes be excessive, leading to the loss of important information, and lowering the quality of work of the IS.

#### **4.4.4 The Organizing Committee (OC)'s role as an influence on the IS's work**

The preparation and planning for an MSE extend several years before and after the actual event, initially involving the establishment of an organizing committee (OC) by the host country. The OC initiates the planning process as early as four to five years in advance of the event (Chen et al., 2013, p.44). To facilitate the smooth-running of the event, the IS office is typically employed by the OC, which also serves the sports association responsible for the event. In the case of MSEs held in China, the IS office is managed by Xinhua News Agency, China's official news agency (Chen et al., 2013, p.49). However, in this research, several

translators and proofreading editors have reported experiencing pressure and difficulties arising from the demands of the OC, who acts as 'Party A' for IS work (Party A refers to the one who pay for Part B to fulfill the obligation in a business contract).

During the interview, interviewee 11 (proofreading editor) explains why they needed to carefully consider certain information related to the organizing committee (OC) during their proofreading work:

*The IS office is influenced and assigned tasks by the organizing committee (OC), which is responsible for planning and executing the event. In our case, the IS office is organized by Xinhua News Agency, which has a higher level than the OC in the Chinese government hierarchy. Despite the fact that our work is not directly subject to the OC, as 'Party A', it has imposed many restrictions on us. For instance, I came across a quote from an interviewee who mentioned that 'the organization of the competition, facilities, and reception service were very good, but the English level of the volunteers needs to be improved. When I asked them for directions, I had to repeat myself so many times, and he still could not understand, and finally, I had to use the help of software translation on my phone'. Generally, it is obviously a compliment to the preparation work of the OC, yet it also points out some shortcomings. English is not an official language in China, so it is not unusual for volunteers to speak it poorly. However, I need to consider the potential consequences of publishing such content. If this were to be published, it could be viewed as a criticism of the OC, who pays us for our services. After careful consideration, I ultimately decided not to publish this content.*

Interviewee 11 views the OC as a client of the IS office since the establishment and guidance of the IS office are under the purview of Xinhua News Agency. However, the OC pays the IS office for the services. From this perspective, Interviewee 11 is aware of the considerations they should make for the OC as an employee. It appears that Interviewee 11 thinks that the information about the volunteers' language proficiency is not directly related to sports competitions and is not beneficial to the OC. If published, it might be interpreted differently by some media outlets. However, there are ethical implications of selectively

publishing only positive feedback while omitting constructive criticism .

Interviewee 13 (proofreading editor) further explains the relationship between the IS office and the OC and her own method of handling sensitive information:

*When it comes to proofreading, it's crucial to consider the potential consequences of publishing any information. As professionals representing the OC, we must be sensitive and alert to the calibre of information we convey to the media. After all, the OC pays us, so when it comes to negative information, it may be best to avoid publishing it altogether. Even with the best of intentions, mistakes can happen, as I recall an incident where we received inaccurate data from OC's data office. Although it was not our fault, the OC was understandably dissatisfied. If we were to publish any information that harms OC's reputation, we could face severe punishment. In summary, we must exercise caution and remember that we represent the OC, and must be mindful of the potential consequences of our actions.*

Interviewee 13 is cautious about handling sensitive information and even avoids all negative content. She views the IS office as the ‘mouth’ of the OC, whose purpose is to deliver what the OC wish the media outlets to read, another form of gatekeeping. However, this perspective contradicts the IS's original purpose, which is to provide writing materials for the media (Jiang, 2014, p.14), not the OC. This raises the question of whether only the IS in MSEs in China faces this predicament. The official IS is only in English and is under the leadership of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), which means it avoids the jurisdiction of the OC and other news agencies of the host country (Zhang et al., 2019, p.51). Interviewee 13's consideration of the OC resembles that of translators towards proofreading editors. They are cautious, even ‘timid’, indicating that the OC puts significant pressure on the work of the IS. However, this may be a natural reaction of IS staff given their understanding of Chinese politics.

Interviewee 15 expresses his views on a particular case and how this sensitive information was ultimately handled. Here is the case:

Figure 4.2: An example discussed by interviewees in this study

HANGZHOU, Dec 10. - Comments from Girts FELDBERGS (LAT) after training at the 14th FINA World Swimming Championships (25m) at the Hangzhou Olympic and Expo Center on Monday.

**Girts FELDBERGS (LAT)**

**On the venue:**

"Everything is fine here, but the ceiling is misleading because it has curves and no straight lines.

"I swim backstroke in the 50 metre and 100 metre events and it's hard to swim straight."

In this flash quote, the interviewed athlete shares a view on the roof of the venue, which makes it difficult to swim backstroke evenly. Whether this should be considered a criticism or just an opinion is debatable. Proofreading editors have had lively discussions about this. The editors who are in favour of keeping this quote believe that it is harmless and related to competitive sports. Additionally, it provides valuable information that few people acknowledge, serving as a reminder for future venue construction and competitions. However, those against keeping the quote mainly focus on the negative, viewing it as a criticism of the OC and pre-match preparations.

Interviewee 15, as the final issuer of the Chinese version of this content in 2018, talks about his view on this issue and recalls how it was handled in the end:

*At the time, I believed that the athlete's comment should be published, and I still hold this view. Firstly, based on the context, the response was not intended as a criticism, but rather an observation. Secondly, I personally find this piece of information to be valuable, as this was a scientific aspect of swimming that not many people may be aware of, including members of the OC who were responsible for constructing the venue. Therefore, sharing this information could be beneficial for future competitions. Additionally, I consulted with experts from The Federation Internationale de Natation (FINA) and reviewed relevant information. I found that FINA did not require the ceiling of the swimming pool to have straight lines for backstroke swimming. Thus, this was*

*simply the athlete's personal opinion. However, during our discussions, we were unable to reach an agreement regarding whether to publish the quote or not. We eventually consulted with relevant personnel from the OC, who decided not to publish it. They reasoned that, despite FINA's lack of regulations on this matter, the media might use this information to criticize the OC for not considering the athletes' needs or for poor planning.*

Interviewee 15's interpretation of sensitive information differs from the perspectives of the two proofreading editors mentioned earlier. Despite the potentially negative impact of this information on the OC, Interviewee 15 values its significance and conducts an investigation to mitigate any potential consequences of its publication. However, since this quote pertains to the construction of the venue and relates to the evaluation of the OC, the IS office ultimately invited the OC to make the final decision after discussions fail to reach a consensus. The OC decided against the publication of the quote. From this whole process of dealing with this information, several observations can be made: a) the IS's definition of sensitive information lacks a consensus among proofreading editors; b) the interests of the OC holds significant influence over the work of the IS office; c) proofreading editors approach sensitive information with caution and aim to shift the responsibility of publishing sensitive information to other offices. These behaviours highlight the complexity of navigating sensitive information in China's highly-censored and politically-charged environment. Sensitive information presents a challenge that no one wants to encounter, because under China's high-level news censorship system, as an official agency facing all kinds of media, the publication of inappropriate or sensitive information by the IS will be classified as a major fault. Since the IS works on an accountability system, any employee who publishes inappropriate information will be given a serious warning, have their wages deducted, or be fined for dereliction of duty.

#### **4.4.5 Summary of theme 3**

In the context of IS work in MSEs in China, the definition of sensitive information has



broadened, including potential negativity related to the OC, Chinese athletes, or the host city, yet individual members of the IS office assess ‘sensitivity’ differently.

This phenomenon is reflected in the special treatment of Chinese athletes, especially by proofreading editors, who handle information related to national image with extreme caution. Translators typically employ two approaches: marking and leaving sensitive information for proofreading editors to deal with, or directly removing it if irrelevant to the main content. Proofreading editors typically adopt four strategies: omitting, neutralizing into a less provocative form, discussing with colleagues to establish a common approach, or seeking advice from the OC or other offices for the final decision.

Reluctance to deal with such content is evident, and the responsibility to avoid it is expected to fall on journalists who collect information. When translators encounter sensitive information, they pass it to proofreading editors, who must navigate numerous restrictions to distance themselves from any potentially sensitive content. This raises questions about whether the IS office's avoidance of sensitive information in its work in China aligns with international IS work requirements.

Additionally, it prompts consideration of whether content published by the IS office in China still possesses ‘information value’ after proofreading editors handle sensitive information with caution. In these previous themes, the interviewees have mentioned that the translation they handled need to be presented accurately in the TT, aligned with the ST so it would not be misread, or misused by the audience. The various opinions being discussed above align in some manner with the fourth theme, which revolves around readers.

#### **4.5 Theme 4: Readers - A compass that orients the work of translators and proofreading editors in the IS**

According to Jiang (2014, p.14) and Chen (2018, p.71), the primary clients of the IS are the registered media who are granted access to the IS content by the OC. In this research, the interviewees frequently discussed the end-users of the IS. Synonyms such as audiences, clients, and users are used interchangeably with the term ‘readers’. However, in the context of

this research, the term ‘readers’ also encompasses those who read translated content. As a result, this chapter analyzes readers from two perspectives: readers of the translated content and readers of the IS. This theme, *readers*, is broken down into four sub-themes: domestication, proofreading editors' editing to better serve the media, the challenge of translating sports terms for the IS, and the difficulties posed by cultural differences during translation and proofreading.

#### **4.5.1 Domestication**

One question in the research is whether the IS staff in the MSEs in China tend to apply domestication (target language-oriented) or foreignization (source language-oriented) more as translation strategy. Surprisingly, the research results indicate that neither strategy is significantly favoured by translators or proofreading editors. However, even though domestication is not explicitly discussed, its core idea is frequently mentioned by both groups. This could be due to the fact that domestication aims to bring the translation closer to the target language and readers, and the translators and editors in the IS, who are native speakers of the target language, may have subconsciously worked in this direction during the translation process. Meanwhile, there is also the possibility that some terms are so unfamiliar to the target readers that translators and proofreading editors have to explain them in the language of the target readers to make sense and improve the readability of the translation.

Interviewee 5 (translator) reveals her strategies in translation, focusing on being fluent, and why the domestication strategy is possibly adopted:

*I don't adhere to either domestication or foreignization as my primary translation strategy. My priority is to deliver accurate sports information. It's not necessary for me to operate on a theoretical level and say which approach I have adopted. However, if I have to choose one, I would lean towards domestication since I'm translating from English to Chinese. The media that uses the IS work speaks Chinese, so I aim for a more human-like translation. My translation shouldn't feel awkward or like a machine*

*translation to proofreading editors or the media reading it.*

Interviewee 5 emphasizes the importance of accuracy and fluency in translation, which echoes the ‘accuracy’ and ‘text logic’ that most translators pay attention to in their translation. She also highlights the importance of catering to readers' requirements in their mother tongue during the translation process. It appears that Interviewee 5 primarily uses the domestication translation strategy, given her consideration of readers and the focus on producing a translation that feels natural in the target language (or, more specifically, feels ‘human-like’), an approach of avoiding ‘translationese’. This aligns with one of the key characteristics of the domestication translation strategy: that the translation is primarily concerned with the readers, and the target readers may be unaware of the fact that they are reading a translated work from another language (Wang, F., 2014, p.2425).

Interviewee 10 (translator) points out the requirements that different styles of information place on translation, and why domestication may be frequently used in the translation work of the IS:

*In my opinion, both domestication and foreignization strategies are applicable depending on the specific situation, so I don't have a clear preference for one over the other. For instance, speeches by leaders of sports associations or press conferences may require preserving the style of the source language. Therefore, what matters most to me is maintaining consistency between my translation and the ST. However, in the case of the IS, most of the texts to be translated are flash quotes that are very casual and colloquial. In this situation, I consider domestication more suitable. Since flash quotes contain straightforward information that doesn't require much embellishment or explanation, it's easy to find the corresponding vocabulary in Chinese. The text is simple and needs to be clear to our readers, so it's important to make it easy and comfortable to read, without sounding too formal or serious. Just thinking about one question: are those colloquial and easy texts closer to their readers in the context of source text? If the answer is yes, when we translate them and keep the style consistent, we also need to be closer to our readers.*

Interviewee 10 contributes an analysis of domestication and foreignization translation strategies, focusing on the IS office's content characteristics. Similar to other translators highlighted in the previous theme *source text*, Interviewee 10 underscores the significance of maintaining consistency in translation style. However, a distinctive perspective emerges, suggesting that domestication is particularly well-suited for translating flash quotes, a primary component of the IS's work. According to Interviewee 10, the reader-oriented style of flash quotes in the ST necessitates a translation that aligns closely with the target language's readers. This viewpoint introduces an interesting perspective on the concept of reader-orientation in translation, proposing that the need for a reader-oriented strategy is rooted in the unique features of the IS's content, rather than an overt attempt to cater to readers. Additionally, Interviewee 10 contends that the source text, composed in English, is also inherently reader-oriented.

Interviewee 10's view supports both reader-oriented and ST-oriented approaches, but his adoption of domestication and foreignization strategies is somewhat vague. This aligns with Zhu's (2002, p.81) idea that many people only observe the contrast between domestication and foreignization, emphasizing their incompatibility while ignoring their potential complementarity. The choice between the two strategies should be based on the specific circumstances of each translation task, with both strategies being able to complement each other. Although the interview question may have led the interviewees to choose a method they favoured, it is surprising to see that both translators and proofreading editors show their preference for combining these two methods.

Interviewee 13 (proofreading editor) evaluates her view of the translators' work and goes on to elaborate on her idea of domestication as a translation strategy and whether it has been applied in the IS:

*When I proofread translations, I often find that many translators fail to convey the original meaning precisely and thoughtfully. Their translations are often not smooth or natural to read. For example, I previously encountered a quote where an athlete said that he/she hoped to be in 'perfect condition' the next day in the final. This phrase cannot*

*be translated literally because there is no equivalent in Chinese for the combination of 'perfect' and 'condition'. Instead, it should be translated as '最佳状态' (best condition) or '完美表现' (perfect performance). Some might argue that this type of translation is domestication, but I believe it's unfair to say that. I haven't over-edited the ST into our (Chinese) cultural context. Rather, I've made the translation more natural and idiomatic in the target language, which is an essential aspect of translation. I consider these details very important because they can make or break a translation. Even though a translation may seem flawless at first glance, subtle issues like this can make it seem awkward or unnatural to readers.*

Interviewee 13 highlights the failure of some translators to use expressions that align with the target language's conventions. Her idea of getting closer to the target language is a reflection of the domestication translation strategy, that is, aiming to enhance readers' acceptance of the translation and make it more readable by incorporating the writing style and vocabulary of the target language (Zhuo, 2022, p.61). The example given by interviewee 13 underscores the importance of proofreading editors' emphasis on the readability of translations, which is also reader-oriented and consistent with the principles of domestication. However, interviewee 13 does not consider her approach as domestication because her behaviour is just 'shun gao' (顺稿) (a term commonly used in proofreading work in China, referring to checking syntax, paragraph coherence, correcting strange expressions, etc., yet based solely on the text itself without checking the translation). This behaviour fits Valdeón's definition of transediting (2023, p.249), that is, additional modification of the previous translation, especially in news. In this case, it means that the proofreading editor merely reads through the translation and refines it without paying too much attention to the ST. This suggests that interviewee 13's understanding of the domestication strategy is still primarily theoretical, focusing on the wording and phrasing in the translation process. What she does, 'shun gao' (顺稿), is just a process of text refinement in her opinion. While her perspective on domestication may be somewhat limited in scope, it still aligns with the concept of domestication and can be considered reasonable.

#### 4.5.2 Proofreading editors' consideration of the media's needs

The content edited by proofreading editors is directly uploaded to the INFO system for use by registered media, making them the closest members of the IS to the readers. Proofreading editors review translations from various perspectives, including accuracy, sensitivity to information, and fluency. While discussing these proofreading operations, some editors also mention the importance of considering the readers. However, it is important to note that they consider 'readers' a factor when aiming for accuracy, handling sensitive information, etc. rather than putting 'readers' needs' first in the proofreading work. That is, when there is a conflict between being 'accurate' and 'reader-friendly', the latter might be overlooked.

Interviewee 11 (proofreading editor) presents the importance of readability in proofreading work and how the IS can receive positive feedback from the media:

*While it's commonly assumed that registered media users of the IS are highly professional sports media, my experience suggests otherwise. Often, the information we provide is directly 'borrowed' by them due to a lack of diligence. Therefore, it's important to prioritize readability alongside accuracy and fluency, regardless of the situation. As a proofreading editor, I typically consider two key aspects: first, whether the translation conforms to the usage habits of Chinese media, and second, whether the media can understand and grasp the core information presented in the translation. By focusing on these two aspects, we can ensure that the registered media using our content are satisfied with our work.*

Interviewee 11 provides valuable insights into the relationship between the IS and its registered media users. Two notable points emerge from this perspective. Firstly, there is speculation that registered media may directly use the 'raw information' provided by the IS without significant processing or integration. This places makes the accuracy of the IS's work even more important, as any mistakes could be attributed directly to the IS by the media using its content. Additionally, this implies that some media outlets may expect the IS to provide

articles ready for direct use, potentially prompting their evaluation of the content quality from the viewpoint of a Chinese speaker. Secondly, Interviewee 11 underscores the importance of the media's evaluation of the IS's work, likening it to how customers assess service satisfaction. By emphasizing these two insights, Interviewee 11 demonstrates a keen understanding of the needs of registered media as customers of the IS. This approach is reader-oriented, but from a service rather than a translation perspective.

Interviewee 16 offers a detailed analysis of the text previously discussed and decided to retain the content enclosed within the brackets. Here is a reminder for the reader of the flash quote:

HANGZHOU, Dec 11. - Comments from Katinka HOSSZU (HUN) after winning the gold medal in the women's 400m individual medley at the Hangzhou Olympic and Expo Centre on Tuesday.

**Katinka HOSSZU (HUN) - gold**

**On the challenges she faced in 2018:**

"I got divorced and I changed my coach [also her husband]. That's what happened this year.

"I obviously had a tough year and a lot of changes. I had a new coach so I'm happy to be back in the shape I know I have been in the past five years."

Despite not being able to include the content in brackets due to instruction from the OC, Interviewee 16 explains why he feels it is important to retain the content, specifically from the perspective of the readers:

*In my opinion, it is highly important to retain the information in the brackets, as it represents a valuable supplement from our English editor and demonstrates a high level of professionalism. Our readers, including the registered media, may not be aware of this information, and it can offer a new perspective for writing articles or conducting interviews. By keeping the bracketed content, we can enhance the reputation and functionality of our IS work, while also lightening the workload for the media using our content. Ultimately, this decision should reflect our responsibility to provide informative*

*and comprehensive content to our readers. Our office is called 'information service' so we should be informative to our reader. I believe what in the brackets is as informative as the rest of the content.*

Interviewee 16 considers the gatekeeping work in the IS from the perspective of providing services for the registered media. He suggests reducing the workload for readers by ensuring the comprehensiveness of the ST, and reiterates the importance of retaining the content in brackets to improve the quality of the IS's work. This viewpoint aligns with previous studies that emphasize the importance of retaining original quotes and background information to enable reporters to freely choose necessary information when writing articles (Liang, 2013, p.50). Interviewee 16's emphasis on being informative reveals a clear understanding of the IS's role in providing information rather than news. His ideas align with the actual implementation of serving readers by offering detailed information and materials. This approach goes beyond merely replacing the work of media outlets; instead, it is in line with the IS's conceptual definition. The focus is on providing comprehensive information, checking for and filling in gaps that readers may find unclear or might have missed. This perspective emphasizes the IS's commitment to its role as an information service (see section 2.3.1).

Interviewee 14 (proofreading editor) comments on the connection between the IS's work and the media and shares how he handles different content in the proofreading work to meet the potential preferences of the readers:

*The IS office is committed to delivering objective and factual news without promoting any ideology or political views. We provide an extra translation service for the IS in China because English proficiency is not widespread in our country. This is particularly true for sports media practitioners, whose English skills may not meet the required level to comprehend the English ST. Therefore, offering a translation service helps them to cover news of the MSEs. I believe it is our responsibility to help our audience complete their work by providing them with the necessary resources. This means that we should consider the perspective of our audience and anticipate their needs. For instance, when*



*reporting on sports events, the audience is primarily interested in data, comments, and post-match interviews. Therefore, I prioritize these elements and avoid spending time processing irrelevant or valueless information.*

Firstly, Interviewee 14 distinguishes between hard news and soft news. Hard news is objective, serious, and data-driven, while soft news is more emotional and human-centred, often involving cultural communication and social phenomena (Zhang, 2016, p.28). Although sports news is normally considered as soft news because it brings sentiments and feelings among the readers, what the IS offers is often strictly content for other journalists to use. Interviewee 14 supports the idea of the IS offering hard news, which aligns with the nature of sports and the internal department management of MSEs in China. As discussed in section 2.2.1, the IS office and the Communication & Promotion department are separate entities, indicating that the IS does not engage in promotional or communicative activities. The fact that the IS's direct reader is not the public but the registered media determines that the content and style of the work of the IS are more likely to be hard news, or at least, factual news. Secondly, Interviewee 14 highlights the inadequate English proficiency of sports journalists in China and emphasizes the importance of providing translation services to the readers of the IS in MSEs. Given that Chinese is the dominant language in China, most sports journalists may prioritize their sports knowledge over improving their English proficiency. Lastly, Interviewee 14 predicts the readers' preferences and refines the reading content to reduce the quantity of reading required. This approach differs slightly from Interviewee 16's suggestion of preserving the multi-angle interpretation of the interviewee's quotes. However, it remains to be seen whether Interviewee 14's forecast of readers' preferences meets the readers' real expectations. However, in fact, there is no evidence that what proofreading editors believe the readers want to read actually matches what the readers are actually looking for. It is a one-way system whereby the proofreading editors make assumptions based on imagining themselves as the readers. In summary, Interviewee 14 provides valuable insights into their perceptions of the readers of the IS, including their preference for hard news, their need for translation services, and their desire for refined reading content. These perspectives illuminate potential strategies for enhancing the IS's ability to serve its readers and accomplish its

mission. However, there is a lack of relevant scholarly discussion or practical research to ascertain whether the readers, media outlets, genuinely appreciate the presumed ideas of the IS team.

#### **4.5.3 The challenge of translating sports terms**

Sports terminology refers to specific words and phrases used in the sports industry, encompassing everything from competitions and regulations to live commentary (Zhao, 2019, p.26). The categories of sports terms mainly include: a) using everyday words in new contexts to create new meanings; b) developing new vocabulary, often named after athletes or specific game skills; c) sharing of synonyms between similar sports, such as tennis and table tennis; and d) slang that is established among athletes and passed on by word of mouth (Zhao, 2019, p.28). In this research, participants were encouraged to discuss how they approach translating and proofreading sports terms. Regardless of the strategy used, they indicated that their goal is to make the terminology easier to understand for readers.

Interviewee 9 (translator) proposes different principles for handling sports terms in different situations:

*If a term is widely recognized, such as penalty kick, hat-trick, or offside, direct translation is often suitable. However, for less familiar terms, referring to a terminology manual and providing an explanation within brackets is typically necessary. For example, gymnastics terms named after athletes may require additional explanation. Some terms, like fish dive or clockwise rotation in volleyball, may be well-known to volleyball fans but not as widely recognized as the terms in football. It's important to mark out such terms, even if they aren't core to the entire translation, to be responsible to the readers. Despite the fact that the chances of encountering sports terms in translations is usually small, it's crucial to check and mark them accurately to avoid any misunderstandings.*

Interviewee 9's criterion for explaining sports terms in the translation is based on his

assumption of the media's familiarity with these terms. Despite this assumption, he takes the initiative to provide additional explanations within brackets, demonstrating a commitment to being responsible to the readers. This approach reflects a proactive stance in ensuring that the audience, including the media, can comprehend the translated content effectively. Nevertheless, this idea of translating sports terms raises the question of whether the translators' judgment of a term's recognition among readers is accurate, and what standard is used to determine this. It is possible that the translator may overestimate or underestimate the familiarity of a term among readers, resulting in readers' evaluation of the content as being either too long-winded or too complex.

Interviewee 10 suggests an approach that could be valuable in determining whether a sports term needs to be explained in translation:

*Just see if the sports live commentary explains the term in detail.*

Although reviewing live sports commentary may provide some insight into whether a sports term needs to be explained in translation, its usefulness is debatable. While it does reach a wide range of audiences, including sports enthusiasts who may be unfamiliar with sports terms, there are limitations to relying solely on live commentary. For one, live commentary has time constraints and needs to be coordinated with the broadcast screen, which may not leave much room for explaining sports terms. Additionally, different commentators or broadcasters vary in their approaches to explaining terms, making it difficult to consistently determine the popularity or familiarity of a term (Tang et al. 2006, p.16).

Interviewee 11 (proofreading editor) classifies the readers of the IS, and explained the necessity of explaining and translating sports terms through the relationship between these two types of readers and the IS:

*When producing content for the IS, it's important to consider that there are two types of readers: direct readers, who are registered media using the IS, and indirect readers, who read the articles written by registered media. While direct readers may be familiar with sports terms, indirect readers may not be. Therefore, it's important to provide*

*translations and explanations for sports terms as much as possible, using the terminology manual provided by OC. This will help to ensure that the IS works effectively and that the media's work is made easier. However, translating sports terms can be difficult and time-consuming. If a term is not included in the terminology manual, it may not be necessary to provide a detailed explanation. Instead, I suggest that translators and proofreading editors just leave it there. There is no need for the risk of getting in trouble by trying to explain terms that we are not sure about. It's also important to remember that the translation of sports terms is not the primary focus of the IS.*

The perspective of Interviewee 11 is primarily focused on reducing the workload of the direct readers of the IS, who are the registered media that need this content to write articles and publish for the public. This perspective is partly in line with the views of Lv and Guo (2022, p.28), who argue that although the direct audience of the IS is the registered media, the public is the indirect or hidden audience of the IS, and therefore, it is important to ensure that the content is precise, professional, prompt, and comprehensive, which differs from the traditional news that only caters to the public. Her viewpoint reflects the two types of sports translation proposed by Huo and Yuan (2022, p.60), that is text that requires professional knowledge and sports experience and text with easier language presentation for the public to read (see section 2.4.4). However, there is insufficient evidence to support a correlation between the two categories (two readers and two types of sports translators).

The discussion regarding direct and indirect users of IS content provoked much reflection on the part of the researcher during the research process. If readers of the IS content can be categorized, and English serves as the official working language within the IS, then translators and proofreading editors can be seen as readers of the original IS work published in English. Translators represent the direct readers, while proofreading editors assume an indirect reader role to some extent since they have access to the material read by translators. Consequently, the translation process within the IS can be viewed as a form of recreation for subsequent layers of readers. However, it is important to note that this reflection by the researcher, while maybe insightful, may not directly align with the current research aim.

Nevertheless, it presents a valuable topic for potential exploration in future research.

Despite this, Interviewee 11 cautions against translating and explaining sports terms, as it may increase the risk of making mistakes and cause a dereliction of duty. This is similar to the principle followed by proofreading editors when handling sensitive information. Thus, Interviewee 11 displays a clear understanding of the different groups of readers of the IS and is somewhat reader-oriented. However, given the difficulty of translating sporting terms, she chooses to be careful in making decisions.

Interviewee 16 summarizes the main difficulties in translating sports terms and mentions the possible responses of readers in each case:

*Translating sports terms can be a challenging task, and based on my experience, there are four different situations that we might encounter. Firstly, if there is a precedent, and a commonly used translation exists, we can use the existing translation. Secondly, when dealing with less popular sports, readers may not be familiar with the corresponding terms. For example, the grabbing skills in freestyle skiing are typically described, and even if a Chinese translation exists, there might be multiple versions of it. In this case, we need to find the most commonly accepted version and explain it further so that readers can understand. Thirdly, some terms might not have an equivalent literal meaning in Chinese, so we must translate them based on existing usage. For instance, the term 'camel spin' in figure skating should be translated as '燕式旋转' (swallow spin), which has no connection with camels. Lastly, some sports terms might not have an established translation in Chinese due to the low popularity of the sport itself. I faced many such instances while working on the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics Knowledge Report. In these cases, we consulted with official associations and athletes to define these terms, and the translation we provided might become the standard for defining these terms in the future. Therefore, we must be very careful and responsible when translating such terms. For instance, while translating the ice hockey section, I borrowed many established translations from football to help readers better understand the terms. Since football terms are more familiar to everyone, this approach helped make the translation more accessible and understandable.*

According to Interviewee 16, the classification and processing principles of sports terms are in line with the definition of the characteristics of sports translation by Zhao (2019, p.27) and Uyanik (2017, p.101) (see section 2.4.4). His translation suggestions take into account different situations and prioritize the principle of making the translation understandable and acceptable to readers. Even when they have the autonomy to translate a term, they adopt a ‘borrowing’ approach from existing terms in the target language to make the translation closer to the readers, which helps them to understand the meaning of the term. Lv and Guo (2022, p.28) also emphasize the importance of considering both the professionalism of sports knowledge and the popularization of text expressions when translating sports terms that are unfamiliar to the general public. The translation must serve professional reporters for publicity and reporting, but also benefit the public in understanding the sport. However, it is debatable whether the ‘borrowing’ principle is advisable. Repeated use of terms with different meanings in different sports might cause confusion among readers, and this may not be beneficial to the sports translation industry as a whole. From a terminology perspective, Zheng (2018, p.32) mentions that the translation of terms should aim to translate the meaning, which means understanding the essential characteristics of the term and avoiding conflicts with other terms. Therefore, it is crucial to find a balance between making the translation understandable to readers and ensuring accuracy and consistency in translating sports terms. However, the readability of content may influence engagement with content from, and ultimately the commercial viability of, the IS. Keeping the ultimate reader in mind, including the use of related terms from more popular sports can therefore be seen as an attempt to retain this balance of readability and accuracy. It is important to note that certain sports terms encountered by the IS are being translated for the first time from English to Chinese. These unfamiliar terms are explained, with the potential for them to become familiar to the public in the future. This aligns with Chouit's idea (2019, p.79) that language evolution can transform ‘foreignized’ terms into ‘domesticated’ terms over time. Therefore, it could be assumed that the standard of applying the domestication strategy, or whether a certain way of translation is defined as ‘domestication’ might vary among individuals due to their experience and perception of the readers’ familiarity with the terms.

#### 4.5.4 Difficulties posed by cultural differences during translation and proofreading

In this research, the interviewees all talked about the challenges associated with the cultural differences between China and the West in their work of translation and proofreading. From the perspective of translation strategies, domestication and foreignization are two distinctive methods of handling the differences between the two cultural backgrounds of the source language and the target language (Wang, F., 2014, p.2425). According to the findings, translators and proofreading editors must carefully consider various factors, such as word choice, sensitive information, and the value of the content when dealing with cultural differences. However, this consideration of cultural differences generally presents in terms of focusing on readers in the cultural background of the target language (Wen & Meng, 2011, p.98).

Interviewee 2 (translator) analyzes the translation problems caused by the differences between Chinese and Western cultures from the perspective of words:

*In the process of translating, I find that English content often uses very extreme words and exaggeration. For example, if an athlete enters the next round, they may use more emotionally-loaded words such as 'leap', 'fight', 'march', etc. If the athlete fails, words such as 'beaten' and 'crushed' will also appear. These may be more commonly seen in sports news in the West, but when translated into Chinese, this vocabulary is not appropriate. I think one aspect is that these words are not very objective. For example, 'march' and 'leap' are too exaggerated, while 'crushed' and 'beaten' are too negative. In Chinese, we still tend to be conservative, and the IS is to provide information, which should not have any emotional tendencies. I don't think it is necessary to use such a vocabulary. When I translate, I will use its most basic meaning as a compromise.*

Interviewee 2's point of view first reflects a certain characteristic of sports news, that is,

to use more emotional and more intensive words to match the intensity of emotion around competitive sports itself (Jiang, 2012, p.24). This characteristic is consistent with the nature of sports itself, that is that sports fit into a larger category of feel-good events like national celebrations that are intended to evoke an uplifting, positive, and generally pleasant feeling (Chen & MacDonald, 2020, p.53). It is surprising to see that the content released by the IS allow words with completely different intensities in Chinese and English versions. It can be speculated that perhaps China's media environment and the low degree of press freedom limit the emotionally-charged characteristics of sports news to some extent. However, the IS's training does not specify what should be done for the translation of such vocabulary. It can be posited that Interviewee 2's notion of 'the golden mean', rooted in Confucian philosophy and denoting an impartial, eclectic, and harmonious approach to addressing various aspects of life, including politics and philosophy, may have influenced his translation work. This concept, known as 'Zhong Yong' in Chinese, is fundamental to Chinese culture and has been integral to Chinese education for centuries (Zhou et al., 2019, p.1-2). However, while Interviewee 2 exhibits this idea, it is deemed not directly relevant to the focus of this study, and thus, further discussion on this concept will not be pursued. While Interviewee 6 (translator) added her comments concerning the usage of vocabulary:

*I only use strong words like '完胜 (annihilate)' to describe victories of Chinese athletes, especially when their opponent is from Japan, because this is the tradition in Chinese sports coverage and also this is what the readers want to read, we must echo their feelings.*

Interviewee 6's perspectives supplement Interviewee 2's discussion on the differential use of sports vocabulary in Chinese and Western sports media, covering various aspects. Firstly, her use of strong words only targets the victory of Chinese athletes, reflecting special attention to China and its athletes, a form of gatekeeping in reverse order. While not related to sensitive information, it demonstrates a unique focus on national sentiment and anti-Japanese feeling (Chen & MacDonald, 2020, p.42). Her specific mention of 'when their opponent is Japan' could be interpreted as a manifestation of China's special sports policy and



a reflexive result of long-standing national and sports policies. Her understanding of readers' needs extends to psychological needs, aiming to emotionally resonate with readers.

Interviewee 7 (translator) indicates the differences in translation between Chinese and Western media due to cultural differences through a specific example:

*The differences between Chinese and Western cultures, as well as the varying sports systems in different countries, can lead to stereotypes and mistakes in translation, especially from Chinese to English. For instance, if an athlete failed a game or did not win a gold medal, we would translate it as 'It is a pity that...' when expressing frustration. However, the English editors specifically discussed this matter with us and requested us to use 'It is too bad that...' to express the disappointment in a more lighthearted way. I learned that using the word 'pity' can be too serious and might detract from the enjoyment of the game. Because this is just a game, and there is only one champion, if they are all pitiable, then 99% of the participants will be pitiable. I am very impressed with this point. Maybe foreign media are not as serious as we (Chinese media) are. From then on, I understood that our readers and the readers of Western media hope to read something different.*

According to Interviewee 7, there are two challenges in translating content in the IS in China. The first challenge is the cultural difference between the East and the West. In Interviewee 7's opinion, Western media tends to focus more on the participation and competitive nature of sports, whereas Chinese media pays more attention to the game's results. The second challenge, as noted by Interviewee 7, is the difference in the levels of seriousness between Chinese and Western media, which is rooted in the difference in the sports system, and perhaps its political history. Taking a full-time job of training and competing, supported by the government, every athlete in China's sports system represents the country's image, and their successes and defeats are tightly linked to the China's global sports image (Hong, 2008, p.35). Therefore, athletes might perceive a loss in a competition as a 'pity', signifying not just a personal letdown but also a failure to meet the expectations of supporters, including the government and the entire national audience. Western athletes, on the other hand, are usually

trained by clubs or motivated by personal interest, so they prioritize participation over results. However, Interviewee 7 also acknowledges that this is a ‘stereotype’, which means this might not be applicable to every situation. Yet as a translator, she understands the difficulty this general difference brings to the process of translation and is aware of not only the cultural differences between China and the West but also the specific preferences of different readers.

Interviewee 13 (proofreading editor) shares her experience in dealing with religious terms and the evaluation of information value brought to the IS work between Chinese and Western Media:

*The differences between Eastern and Western cultures present significant challenges in translation. To address these challenges, domestication is a crucial process that ensures that the translation is in line with the readers' cultural and linguistic habits. However, domestication is not just about word choice but also involves evaluating the cultural context and determining which content needs to be translated. For example, when translating interviews with athletes that mention ‘God’, it is inappropriate to use the literal translation of ‘上帝’ (God) since the majority of Chinese citizens are not Christians. In such cases, using the exclamation ‘天啊’ (Heaven) is more culturally appropriate. Likewise, at a press conference on equestrians, the OC talked a lot about the horses, such as how to ensure quarantine standards when the horses pass through customs, and how the OC maintains the health of these horses after entering China to ensure that they can compete. We spent a long time translating the information, but in the end the Western media didn't think the information was worthwhile, because it was the OC's obligation and had little to do with the MSE. This indicates the importance of providing readers with the information they need. While some content may not be of interest to Western readers, it may be valuable to readers in the East.*

Interviewee 13 first discusses and analyzes the translation theory of domestication. She thinks that domestication is not only about working on translation skills and choosing words according to the habits and cultural background of the target language but also about

inspecting and editing content according to the needs of readers. This approach mixes the theories of domestication and gatekeeping. Although interviewee 13's views are based on the differences in Chinese and Western cultural backgrounds, her translation is closer to the needs of readers, but in her work, she collapses the boundaries between gatekeeping and proofreading. Her avoidance of religious words can be seen as an act of gatekeeping for sensitive information. In the end, the Chinese and Western media's views on the OC press conference illustrate the impact of readers' demand on editors. It is understandable that such content is needed in Chinese versions as publicity to demonstrate soft power, a method for the OC to display its political achievements. This is the OC's responsibility to the mass media, and the media will directly use such content for article writing. This difference in relationships to the OC, or to difference in cultural attitudes to sports between China and the West places certain requirements on the work of IS, especially the work of proofreading editors. Nonetheless, it could be argued that Interviewee 13's meticulous proofreading behaviour under these circumstances still reflects a refined approach. She may be motivated by the desire to cater to the expectations of the majority of Chinese readers and to mitigate any potential criticisms regarding her perceived incompetence in adhering to the conventions of Chinese readership. Additionally, the cultural disparities highlighted in this context can be likened to the divergent sports policies across various countries, including varying perceptions of the attainments of sports, how sports competitions are portrayed in relation to other cultural phenomena, among other factors.

#### **4.5.5 Summary of theme 4**

In the context of the IS in MSEs in China, the IS members' work is subject to stringent requirements in terms of fluency, accuracy, readability, and even sentiments. Readers of IS content can be categorized into two groups: direct readers, who are typically media professionals, and indirect readers, who are members of the public. Therefore, the work of the IS must consider both the working practices of direct readers and acceptability to indirect readers in their translations. Despite the challenges posed by translating sports terms and cultural differences between Chinese and Western audiences, the IS staff, particularly

proofreading editors, keep in mind indirect readers. There are three reasons for this. Firstly, although the content is initially edited by direct readers, indirect readers are the ultimate audience of the IS. Secondly, prioritizing indirect readers reduces the workload of direct readers, making the content more readily available for publication. This, in turn, leads to positive feedback from media professionals regarding the IS's work. Thirdly, the content that the public wants to read is ultimately provided by the IS, and thus, it is important for the IS to accommodate the needs of the public into its work. Given the diversity of the readership, the IS's reader-oriented behaviour is largely based on projections of what readers might want. Translators' and proofreading editors' methods for achieving this can be viewed as a combination of the domestication translation strategy and gatekeeping. However, it can be argued that translations within the IS office diverge from typical translations in terms of content and text structure. Additionally, translation of certain expressions may already be accepted through common practice. In such cases, translators, particularly proofreading editors, may not recognize or may be reluctant to acknowledge the application of domestication strategies. As a result, the IS's use of the domestication strategy is mixed with gatekeeping, and there is no clear boundary between the two approaches.

## 4.6 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the emergence of four main themes is rooted primarily in the insightful responses provided by the interviewees. These themes illuminate various aspects through which translators and proofreading editors enhance their translation work during the translation and editing process, showcasing their interconnected nature. To provide a brief overview, *accuracy* embodies the translation team's acknowledgment of translation work in the traditional sense, emphasizing the transformation of meaning from the ST to the TT. *Source text* underscores the translation team's reverence for the ST, serving as the input stage of the translation process. *Sensitive information* encapsulates the gatekeeping role of the translation team, while *readers* represents the output of the whole translation work, corresponding to the ST. Together, these four themes encapsulate the translation behaviours

and philosophies of the interviewees.

It is reasonable to posit that the conclusions drawn from the participants can be considered representative of the opinions of the entire translation team within the IS in China. This assertion is supported by the purposive selection of participants based on their diverse characteristics such as gender, experience, and roles within the IS office. Additionally, the observed level of agreement among the perspectives gathered from different interviews indicates a degree of saturation, further bolstering the validity of the conclusions.

Notably, if focusing on the ST is employed as a foreignization strategy, the translation team's interpretation of the ST is not geared towards preserving its 'strangeness' but rather adhering to it in terms of textual form, stylistic elements, and logic. Thus, it is not the traditional concept of foreignization. Conversely, when leaning towards readers is perceived as a domestication strategy, the translation team refrains from excessively eliminating the characteristics of the ST, prioritizing content and readability based on readers' needs. Hence, it can be argued that the approach undertaken does not strictly adhere to a domestication strategy. The data indicates that the translation team exhibits reluctance to categorically define any specific strategy they favour. Instead, individual preferences vary, with explanations provided suggesting a comprehensive yet random application of both methods.

Nevertheless, the discussion about the translation behaviour they applied is not solely about domestication and foreignization. It can be inferred that the translation strategy employed is akin to 'transediting', a concept that entails gatekeeping during translation, which is recognized by Chinese scholars and media practitioners. However, this task has been divided into two distinct parts: translation, handled by translators, and proofreading along with gatekeeping, overseen by proofreading editors. Particularly noteworthy is the revelation that proofreading may not dominate the role of proofreading editors. Instead, their focus lies in handling sports terminology, verifying factual data, and exercising gatekeeping over content.

Based on the data, it is evident that the translation methods utilized within the IS office in China exhibit an unstable and shifting character, primarily influenced by the creativity and preferences of the translators and proofreading editors. These practices operate within the confines of delivering accurate, timely TTs, and screening sensitive information. I propose to

designate this translation strategy as *Versalation*, a fusion of the words ‘versatil’ and ‘translation’. This term signifies a flexible and pragmatic approach to translation, enabling translators and proofreading editors to exercise creativity while taking various factors into account. It avoids reliance on rigid strategies that might constrain the advantages gained from their prior translation experience.

The upcoming conclusion in the next chapter will elaborate on these insights.

## Chapter 5: Conclusion

Given the expanding influence and prevalence of the Chinese language and an increasing number of international sports events being organized in the country, there is a growing need for research into translation between English and Chinese. Translation, as an independent and practical discipline, has made significant advancements in China's higher education both in academic and practical field. However, translation work within the context of the IS, specifically in MSEs remains understudied.

The purpose of this chapter is to review the dissertation's aim and objectives, showcasing the study's contribution to knowledge in the field of translation, specifically in sporting events. The significance of the current study will be explored, alongside its implications for translation practices and future research.

Employing a qualitative approach, the study is based on the thematic analysis of interviews with 16 participants (10 translators and 6 proofreading editors). By centring on the reflections and ideas derived from the specific translation behaviours uncovered in the study, it explores the practical approaches translators and proofreading editors use in their work, focusing on 'how it is done', rather than merely analyzing 'how it should be done'. The data analysis reveals four prominent themes: *accuracy*; *source text*; *sensitive information*; and *readers*.

These identified themes not only bolster certain translation and gatekeeping theories proposed in prior research but also underscore the diversity, creativity, and individual preferences of translators and proofreading editors in their translation endeavors. Moreover, they elucidate the rationale behind these characteristics and shed light on how translators and proofreading editors perceive their jobs, providing a different perspective for the IS office in terms of position settings, communication mechanisms, and rules establishment inside and outside the office.

To address the first research question regarding the translation strategies employed in the IS, this research demonstrates that the IS team utilizes a fluid selection of strategies. These strategies are adaptively applied within a framework that emphasizes precision and draws

heavily on the experience and subjectivity of translators and proofreading editors—a practice often observed in the fields of ESP (English for Special Purposes) and ‘transediting’. This approach is conceptualized as a pragmatic method termed *Versalation* (see Chapter 5.1).

To address the second research question regarding applicable strategies for meeting time constraints in IS work and selecting terms, this study first examines the potential use of domestication (reader-oriented) and foreignization (source-oriented). The findings reveal that these strategies have limited impact within the IS office. Given the mandate to prioritize precision and adhere to specific philosophies of news and sports translation, translators and proofreading editors are often unaware of employing either strategy, even when the terms are explained to them. The research indicates that domestication is used more frequently and across a wider range of scenarios, whereas foreignization is primarily applied to sports terminology and highly specialized content. However, the findings suggest that the *Versalation* strategy (which leans more heavily toward domestication) emerges as the most pragmatic approach for the IS team. This preference is influenced by several factors, including considerations for both direct and indirect readers, an implicit bias toward Chinese athletes, the predominance of Chinese as the target language, and the perception of IS translation as a form of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). A more detailed discussion of these findings is presented in Chapter 5.1.

To address the final research question concerning the definition and handling of sensitive information, this research highlights the presence of gatekeeping, or the screening of information, within the translation process. IS team members consistently agree on the importance of identifying sensitive information. However, their sensitivity to and approaches to handling such information vary significantly due to their individual perspectives and professional experience. The findings indicate that, for some professionals in the IS, the scope of sensitive information has expanded to include any content that could potentially jeopardize the interests of stakeholders involved in sports events or even affect individuals watching the event who may share an emotional connection. The most commonly employed method for managing sensitive information is omission. Proofreading editors bear greater responsibility in handling sensitive content, as they act as the final publishers of translations (see Chapter 5.2).



## **5.1 Translation strategies applied in the IS in MSEs in China**

The study reveals that translation methods vary among translators and proofreading editors. The overarching goal they have expressed is to ensure that what is produced is unbiased information that is readily accepted by various readers without factual or political mistakes. The research findings shed light on why some proofreading editors find the connections between the translation in the IS and ESP (English for Specific Purposes), as explained below.

### **5.1.1 A more complex picture than existing strategies suggest**

This study finds that translators and proofreading editors do not adhere to rigid or universal strategies in their practice. Rather, they focus on specific aspects, namely, ‘being accurate’, ‘aligning with the source text’, ‘being neutral’ and ‘reader-friendliness’. These findings align with previous research that has underscored the significance of ‘accuracy’ (Guo, 2016), ‘neutrality’ (Jiang & Guo, 2018; Lv & Guo, 2022), and staying true to the ST as fundamental principles in sports journalism translation.

However, this research expands the notion of ‘accuracy’ in translation by emphasizing not only precision of word choice and information symmetry, but also the importance of maintaining logical consistency and narrative style congruent with the ST. For proofreading editors, ‘accuracy’ also pertains to ensuring that the published work will be correctly interpreted by the media outlets, carrying no potential risk of being misread or used by those with other intentions.

The act of gatekeeping appears to have been applied all the way through the translation process. Translators normally do not intentionally omit or paraphrase the ST, but proofreading editors may delete, explain, revise, or edit the translation in their preferred methods.

Moreover, there is no inherent conflict between the ST and the reader; rather, both are considered by translators and proofreading editors as integral elements throughout the translation process. The practitioners demonstrate a balanced approach and are not

exclusively inclined towards one side. However, translators primarily prioritize the ST while proofreading editors concentrate more on the readers. This phenomenon is understandable due to the intermediary role of translators, who only need to handle the ST that will later be passed on to proofreading editors. Conversely, the work of proofreading editors directly faces the readers. This disparity in focus may also elucidate why translators are often less motivated and less engaged in gatekeeping tasks.

### **5.1.2 More than a flexible utilization of domestication and foreignization**

This research shows that the IS office does not explicitly favour either domestication or foreignization as translation strategies. In fact, most interviewees, particularly those with more experience in the IS work, exhibit reluctance to define or confine their translation or proofreading strategies within the frameworks of domestication and foreignization theories. One of the reasons would be that the definition of whether a certain way of delivering the TT in accordance to the ST belongs to domestication or foreignization varies among individuals due to their experience in translation and familiarity of the sports terms.

However, the interviewees' reluctance or inability to definitively categorize their strategies as either domestication or foreignization does not imply a rejection of these concepts. The data indicates that a combination of both strategies is employed, contingent upon specific scenarios and the seriousness of the content. Domestication is used for more casual content such as flash quotes, capturing vivid emotions, while foreignization is employed for special terms and formal content like press conference highlights, prioritizing factual information delivery. However, there seems to be a slight preference for domestication. There are several phenomena that could explain the preference for the domestication strategy: a) the fact that the translators aim to reach fluency in their translation; b) proofreading editors' consideration for the readers' needs; c) the translation team's special treatment of Chinese athletes; d) the conversion of units and factual data to the formats that the TT readers are familiar with; and e) the perceived need to use bracketed explanations.

### **5.1.3 A not very sports-related translation**

While previous studies suggest that translation in the sports industry tends to be more daring and stronger in vocabulary choices (Guo, 2016) or employs more intense language to align with the inherent competitiveness of sports (Chen et al., 2020), the data suggests that the IS staff rarely resort to radical vocabulary to conform to the ‘sports news’ style. This preference may stem from the shared consensus among IS staff that their role is to provide accurate, neutral, and unbiased information rather than news. They contend that simplicity in conveying information facilitates reader comprehension and helps the IS office avoid potential controversies arising from divergent opinions, such as those from sports fans or certain media outlets. Despite this, the translation in the IS is still closely related to sports. After all, its text content is sports information, and sports vocabulary and terminology are inevitable. It is this that, some interviewees argue, makes the information that they translate an instance of ESP.

However, it should be noted that some interviewees argue that the IS works should possess a distinct ‘sports flavour’. The divergence of opinions may be attributed to variations in the familiarity of proofreading editors with sports and sports-related terminology, as well as discrepancies in their experiences within the IS. Interestingly, the data shows that proofreading editors who tend to add a ‘sports flavor’ to translations are usually those with less experience in the IS or those who are passionate about sports. In contrast, proofreading editors with journalism backgrounds are less enthusiastic about incorporating sports features into their translations, unlike their counterparts with translation and academic backgrounds.

In sum, the IS in China covers both types of sports translation (highly specialized sports academic translation and general text translation that utilizes sports information as its carrier), with a primary emphasis on the latter—translating collected information where sports information serves as a contextual backdrop. In this process, there is typically no need to excessively prioritize the terminology and expressions commonly used in sports media.

### **5.1.4 Supplementary explanation is never wrong**

This research furnishes evidence that the incorporation of complements or metaphors is

viewed as an effective means to establish closer connections with readers (Shuttleworth & Cowie, 2014; Munday, 2016; Karpńska, 2018). This approach encompasses various strategies, such as providing additional explanations, translating obscure sections of text into more accessible expressions, and incorporating necessary conjunctions or background information to ensure the logical coherence of the translation. These techniques are not signs of poor translation, but are employed with the aim of aiding readers' understanding and maintaining the accuracy of information. This strategy is considered a reliable approach to simplify and enhance readability while avoiding any deviations from the content and logical presentation of the translations.

This study reveals that both translators and proofreading editors acknowledge and accept the method of adding explanations in translation. In this study, none of the interviewees view this method as cumbersome or redundant. This new discovery serves as a complement to the earlier conclusion that proofreading editors often opt to include additional information within brackets as an explanatory measure when they perceive the translation to be inadequate (Zhao, 2019). In other words, prior studies indicated this complementary practice as more of a remedy rather than an accepted approach. However, their recognition of these supplementary explanations is confined to sports terms, nouns and logical connections. Proofreading editors remain skeptical about undisclosed or more sensitive information.

### **5.1.5 The requirement to serve diverse readers**

It is worth mentioning that the principle of 'reader-friendliness' is also one of the translation philosophies adopted by translators and proofreading editors, emphasizing that the content delivered by the IS office should be easily understood, conform to Chinese expression patterns, and be well-received by readers (Guo, 2016; Jiang, 2014). The objective of aligning with readers extends beyond adopting the domestication strategy in the academic sense, which aims to make readers not perceive the text as a translation. Yet, characterizing this translation work solely as a facilitator of readers' comprehension and as an example of the use of domestication strategies is overly simplistic.

This study reveals that the translation team's attention to readers reaches beyond merely

adjusting the TT to the reading habits and cultural background of TT readers. Instead, during the gatekeeping process, information is selectively filtered, considering readers in terms of content, emotion, and the overarching purpose of the text. This is because the concept of readers also extends to surveillance level such as the OC, an external pressure that has emerged as additional readers that the IS office must take into account at work.

This study further confirms the definition of readers as perceived by proofreading editors, which includes both direct readers of the IS—registered media users who pay and are granted by the OC to have access to the IS content, and indirect readers—the general public who read news related to the MSE (Lv & Guo, 2022). The interview data suggests that varying interpretations among proofreading editors regarding the breadth and depth of readers directly influence differences in the final translation. When proofreading editors perceive a broader audience of indirect readers, they are inclined to incorporate more supplementary explanations in their translations. Moreover, both translators and proofreading editors stand in for the primary readers of the IS content in their translation work for their presumed direct and indirect readers, whose native language, and, importantly, culture, corresponds to their own. In other words, the shared culture and values among the translation team is significant at work, because their gatekeeping of information is based on aspects like their political awareness.

#### **5.1.6 A complex translation strategy- *Versalation***

The study suggests that there are no universal translation strategies applied in IS work in China. While certain previous translation approaches in fields such as news and sports have proven applicable, the data reveals that translation strategies within the translation team vary according to specific cases. Both translators and proofreading editors prioritize accuracy and efficiency in their work. Guided by this fundamental philosophy, the translation team considers factors such as omitting irrelevant content, incorporating elements of sports news, eliminating ‘foreignness’ from the ST, and tailoring the TT to suit the preferences of the readership. Nonetheless, the translation team also seeks to maintain creativity and employ techniques to enhance the quality of the TT within the constraints of time and diverse

interests.

I propose the term *Versalation* to conceptualize this strategy—a versatile approach that balances the fundamental requirements of fidelity and expressiveness while adhering to non-standardized guidelines to produce a TT that meets the expectations of all stakeholders involved. This pragmatic strategy acknowledges that an acceptable or a good translation may emerge from moments of inspiration. *Versalation* represents a derivative of domestication and foreignization but addresses the limitations of these traditional strategies in contexts where translators and proofreading editors face practical challenges, such as tight time constraints, the need for data accuracy, and organizational priorities. This concept also reflects the growing complexity within the translation industry, where overlapping disciplines give rise to new translation genres that lack specific guidelines and cannot be fully explained by existing theories. It highlights the flexible and adaptive nature of translation in such contexts. However, a potential drawback of this strategy is the increased amplification of translators' subjectivity. While this may enhance translation speed and provide greater flexibility in refining texts into more polished final products, it also introduces the risk of reduced objectivity in certain contexts.

The rationale behind this translation strategy stems from the intricate process that published content in the IS undergoes, involving numerous reviews and revisions by multiple individuals. This multi-person accountability system serves to mitigate the likelihood of errors in published manuscripts. However, it also renders it impractical to formulate a specific translation strategy or to impose specific measures on individuals involved in the process.

## **5.2 Proofreading editors' leading role in the IS in MSEs in China**

This study also examines the roles of translators and proofreading editors within the IS office. The research indicates that translators primarily fulfil their role as translators, while proofreading editors serve as representatives, gatekeepers, and coordinators with external departments. However, this division of labour has resulted in several work-related challenges. Despite these challenges, proofreading editors remain integral to the overall functioning of the

IS office.

### **5.2.1 Two information processing experts with the same goal but different roles**

This study reveals that translators are responsible for ‘being fast’, while proofreading editors are responsible for ‘being accurate’. Both translators and proofreading editors assume the role of gatekeepers, ensuring the suitability of content published by the IS office.

The research supports the idea that translators, especially proofreading editors, have the authority to determine what content gets published, aligning with White's (1950) definition of a ‘gatekeeper’. It also fits the descriptions from previous studies that have used terms like ‘pioneers’ (providing standards and references for future sports translation) (Lv & Guo, 2022) or ‘conductors’ (controlling the text presentation of the entire MSE) (Chen et al., 2013) to define proofreading editors.

However, this research suggests that the purpose of gatekeeping is not to manipulate public opinions or engage in propaganda, in contrast to previous studies. Instead, it is to ‘de-view’ (erasing information with personal biases, opinion analysis, political positions, etc.) the IS content, avoiding conflicts with readers or relevant departments due to differing values or individual viewpoints.

By preserving the integrity and purity of the IS content, translators and proofreading editors aim to protect themselves and the IS office from becoming entangled in political issues. This cautious approach reflects their primary objective of safeguarding themselves from China's strict and highly sensitive news censorship system, preventing them from unintentionally becoming catalysts for conflict or being manipulated by politically motivated parties.

Based on the feedback from the interviewees, proofreading editors have specific expectations of translators. They require translations to be devoid of factual and principled errors, avoid arbitrary deletions and changes, and adhere to prompt timelines. In many instances, proofreading editors consider the translator's work as the basis for the final draft, making modifications to content, enhancing language, and handling sensitive information. This approach aligns closely with the academic community's concept of ‘transediting’.

Surprisingly, some proofreading editors reveal that they do not use the translator's work as a blueprint for their proofreading. Instead, they employ their own interpretation and comparison methods to review the translation, more like a revision. This approach may lead to a lack of effective collaboration between translators and proofreading editors. In contrast to translators, who have a relatively straightforward role, proofreading editors face a more complex set of tasks when publishing IS content. Their responsibilities include gatekeeping to ensure no inappropriate information is included, reviewing and editing the content, and verifying factual data. These multifaceted responsibilities highlight the various factors that impact proofreading editors, which will be concluded in the following section.

### **5.2.2 Proofreading editors facing numerous relevant interest groups**

This research emphasizes that proofreaders play a vital and multifaceted role within the IS office. The finding aligns with previous academic research that suggests that proofreading editors in the IS in MSEs in China are gatekeepers who regulate the content of the IS (Lv & Guo, 2022) and specialists who control the quality of the translation (Guo, 2016), while the IS speaks for the OC in information dissemination during and before the MSE (Jiang, 2014; Chen, 2019).

However, this research makes additional discoveries about the working practices of proofreading editors. Firstly, the study uncovers that proofreading editors face pressure not only from internal sources, as required by their role as the publishers of the IS, but also from various stakeholders, whose interests they also seek to protect, such as the OC, Chinese athletes, and host cities. This represents another form of gatekeeping, which is beyond the scope of traditional gatekeeping in the political sense.

Secondly, the study reveals that many proofreading editors prioritize publishing information that they believe readers want to read, which proves that the opinions of media outlets and the public also affects proofreading editors. For instance, there is a noticeable preferential treatment given to Chinese athletes, whereby negative news about them is deliberately suppressed, and their statements are sometimes embellished or glorified. While such behaviour may somewhat aid the work of readers, particularly registered media users,



their reasons for doing this remain unsubstantiated. The proofreading editors' perception of reader's preferred information is merely speculation, which can occasionally be conflated with what the sports media requires.

Thirdly, proofreading editors shoulder distinct responsibilities corresponding to various stakeholder groups. Gatekeeping safeguards the interests of the host city and OC from negative assessments. Examining and editing translations serve as a quality control measure, aiming to enhance reader satisfaction, uphold the integrity of the ST. Checking factual data contributes to the reputation of the IS office and the functioning of other OC departments.

Fourthly, when considering gatekeeping, word selection, and word processing in translation, the philosophy embraced by proofreading editors aligns with the continuity of China's sports policy. On the one hand, there is an active involvement of information processing related to Chinese athletes, reinforcing the concept of 'JuGuo TiZhi' (举国体制), where Chinese athletes embody the distinctive characteristics of the country's image. On the other hand, there is a keen understanding of China's political will and the strategies employed in hosting MSEs. This approach reflects a responsiveness to the nation's objectives in hosting MSEs, encompassing translation and information control.

Nevertheless, there is one interest that proofreading editors prioritize the most, that is, their own reputation as the final issuers of the content. Their objective is to safeguard themselves from potential conflicts and criticism stemming from anyone accessing the IS content.

In essence, proofreading editors function as editors, decision-makers, and leaders within the IS office. This multifaceted role requires proficiency in Chinese-English translation, a deep understanding of sports, expertise in writing, and political awareness. Given the varying experiences of proofreading editors in these aspects, their evaluations of translations differ, leading to the exploration of their preferences in the subsequent section.

### **5.2.3 Proofreading editors' individual preferences**

This study has discovered that proofreading editors take their responsibilities in gatekeeping seriously, a highly subjective behaviour (White, 1950), and fully display their subjectivity in the translation process (Fu, 2019).

Additionally, the research has brought to light that, in the context of translation within the IS in MSEs in China, there exist no specific regulations governing gatekeeping standards. Consequently, preferences for information inclusion, as well as favored language presentation in translations, exhibit variability among IS office members, encompassing proofreading editors and translators alike.

While proofreading editors are carefully selected by the IS office and follow certain rules and standards in their work, the research reveals that their individual styles of proofreading differ. Each editor possesses their own set of criteria, especially when it comes to handling information that lacks a strong boundary but is somewhat sensitive (i.e., information that does not involve political, military affairs, or religious matters). There is no consensus among proofreading editors regarding the handling of this type of information. This variation in approach to their roles also helps to explain proofreading editors' inconsistent requirements for translators. They naturally put forward different requirements for translations according to their personal preferences and proofreading habits.

The diversity of standards of proofreading also shows that the work of the whole IS contains some personalized information processing under a large basic framework, and it also reflects why the translation strategies used by translators and proofreading editors are so comprehensive, generating the *versalation* translation strategy proposed in this study. Analysis indicates that proofreading editors are aware of the distinctions within their proofreading work and respect these differences. It can be inferred that these disparities may stem from the fact that each proofreading editor focuses on a different interest group/reader in their work. Alternatively, it is precisely because the IS office has granted adequate authority and trust to proofreading, allowing the *versalation* strategy to be applied.

### **5.3 Implications for Practice**

This study has yielded valuable insights into the field of translation within the IS in MSEs in China, focusing on the roles of translators and proofreading editors. The key

findings and recommendations for future practice are summarized below:

Firstly, the study emphasizes the importance of gatekeeping in translation work. It suggests the need for clear regulations, especially concerning information related to MSEs that may not be positive. Establishing standard gatekeeping practices can enhance the efficiency of the IS team.

Secondly, the research highlights the absence of a specific favoured translation strategy within the IS office. Translators and proofreading editors rely on their experience and preferences. The recommendation is to organize more translation practice or operations to streamline translation approaches.

Thirdly, the study identifies an overlap between IS translation and ESP, indicating a shortage of talent covering the sports industry. It recommends the cultivation of specialized translation skills, particularly in sports, to address this gap.

Fourthly, the research reveals that proofreading editors invest significant effort in checking factual data, a task that might be considered outside their primary role. The recommendation is to designate someone specifically for handling factual data or enhance the database system for easier access, thereby improving accuracy and efficiency of the translation process.

Fifthly, the study underscores the different perceptions among translators regarding their responsibilities. While accuracy within a limited time is a shared objective, there is variability in opinions about whether translators should assume tasks traditionally handled by proofreading editors, such as checking factual data or editing sensitive information. Some translators opt for a reminder approach, reflecting the adaptability to differing requests from proofreading editors. Recommendations include establishing clearer obligations for each position within the IS in China, with more specific regulations to guide their roles.

Sixthly, the study brings attention to the various pressures proofreading editors face from different interest groups. The recommendation is to strengthen or establish clearer responsibilities and role of the IS office within the MSEs in China, considering both internal and external pressures.

These findings are anticipated to contribute to the future planning, post-setting, and coordination of communication mechanisms for IS work in China. The hope is that these

recommendations will enhance the effectiveness and clarity of roles within the IS, fostering improved performance and communication.

## **5.4 Recommendations for Future Research**

This study effectively answers the research questions while exploring the translation practices of translators and proofreading editors within the IS in MSEs in China. As an inherently practical and interdisciplinary study, several avenues for further exploration and in-depth research have emerged throughout the investigative process, with primary emphasis on the following aspects:

Firstly, this study posits that the absence of established strategies in the IS in MSEs in China is a result of multifaceted considerations. Factors such as source text nuances, logical coherence, target readership, and content appropriateness complicate the formulation of standardized strategies. This intricacy can be attributed to the interdisciplinary nature of the IS, potentially leading to a reliance on experiential and habitual approaches within an existing regulatory framework due to the absence of highly proficient or senior individuals formulating explicit strategies. Moreover, the intricate web of variables involved in translation within this domain poses a challenge in developing universally applicable translation strategies. Future research endeavors could investigate whether the IS members prioritize additional aspects beyond the four themes emerged in this study. Alternatively, future studies could focus on interviewing experienced proofreading editors to compile a set of general guiding translation strategies and examples to inform translation practices.

Secondly, this study reveals clear distinctions in job responsibilities between translators and proofreading editors within China's IS team. Translators are primarily responsible for translation, while proofreading editors undertake editing and publication tasks. However, communication issues arise between the two roles. Problems include the review of specific sports-related data and the involvement of gatekeeping behaviours. This research identifies a notable communication barrier between translators and proofreading editors, which negatively impacts work efficiency. However, due to limitations in time, this study cannot further investigate the possibility of grouping proofreading editors based on their

proofreading preferences and establishing specific requirements for translators set by these groups to enhance the overall work efficiency of the IS office. Future research could explore methods to overcome communication barriers arising from established job responsibilities or redefine the specific roles and responsibilities of translators and proofreading editors.

Thirdly, this study unexpectedly uncovered instances where proofreading editors do not solely rely on the work of translators, lacking trust in the translations they receive and in some cases completely re-translating the ST. These findings prompt questions regarding the necessity of translator positions within IS team in China or the reasonableness of having a considerably smaller number of proofreading editors compared to translators. Future research could delve into the rationale behind establishing translation positions within the IS office, such as budgetary considerations or the possibility of having translators directly publish simple translations that do not involve sensitive information.

Fourthly, this study highlights that translators and proofreading editors engage in gatekeeping behaviours, potentially to safeguard themselves or satisfy the external stakeholders. However, the underlying reasons for this self-protective mechanism are not explored due to time constraints. Further research could investigate the advantages of this mechanism and its origins. Additionally, the data implies that the distinct treatment of Chinese athletes may stem from political obligations or considerations for the readers. It would be valuable to explore if patriotism and unconscious personal biases towards athletes of the same nationality are also contributing factors.

Fifthly, this study finds that the so-called ‘providing the information readers want to see’ by proofreading editors lacks solid empirical evidence. To date, no research has definitively determined the specific information preferences of IS readers. A prospective avenue for future investigation could entail a direct exploration of this matter or the implementation of a customer satisfaction survey within the IS office. Such an approach would aim to glean insights into readers' preferences, particularly regarding the dichotomy between factual data and sentimental information concerning athletes post-competition. Another recommended area for further research could be what media sources who use the IS actually want. For example, what do they think about the translation of flash quotes? These exploration hold promise in illuminating the focus of the IS team in their future work.

Lastly, this study indicates that the gatekeeping behaviours of translators and proofreading editors also lack specific guidelines and are instead influenced by each individual's political sensitivity and the team's consensus on what constitutes inappropriate information. This consensus stems from the political education received in China, from elementary school to higher education. While proofreading editors emphasize focusing on MSE-related information, it is worth examining whether this justification reflects their inability to summarize or explain the real reason for processing other information of less MSE-relevance (such as information about athletes' personal lives, complaints against referees, etc). Future research could attempt to classify information within the ambiguous zone through textual analysis and propose approaches for dealing with this information through focus groups.

## **5.5 Reflections on the Research Journey**

Throughout my research journey, I had the privilege of interviewing several translators and proofreading editors, whose valuable feedback and insights provided me with inspiration and assistance. I hope that my research can serve as a source of inspiration for their future work.

Engaging in qualitative analysis research for the first time, I was pleasantly surprised by the unexpected answers I received during the interviews. It allowed me to discover the joy of conducting qualitative research. Initially, I was concerned that the interviewees might be cautious when discussing topics like gatekeeping, considering their political inclinations and personal interests. However, they actively participated in the interviews and provided significant and meaningful data, supporting the focus of my research.

As someone with practical experience in the field of translators and proofreading editors in the IS office, I found it gratifying to gain a deeper understanding of their work through both my experience and effective communication with them. I was surprised by the unexpected answers I received from the interviewees. Despite my previous experience in different positions within the IS office, each interviewee provided unique perspectives and descriptions

of their role that differed from my initial expectations. In the translation process when reading through the thoughts of the interviewees, it shocks me that even though translators seem to do the same job the theory and behaviour of each individual is so different. It illuminates the essence of translation and how translation is done by the translator. Especially when talking about direct and indirect readers of the IS, I begin to ponder the concept of reader. If accepting information is a form of reading, then could translation be comprehended as reading and then rewriting or recreation? Though this notion has existed for a long time, I have never developed profound interest in it. However, through this study, I have become intrigued by this academic topic.

Generating themes proved to be a challenge for me, as the final themes did not align with my initial expectations. There were numerous quotes containing valuable information across various aspects that could be categorized into different subthemes. Additionally, some quote implied a deeper meaning that matched a theme different from the theme that it initially appeared to support. In situations of overlap, critical thinking based on the tone of the interviewees or repeated confirmation of conveyed points became necessary. For instance, the theme *readers* emerged unexpectedly from this process.

This research has been fruitful for several reasons. Firstly, it introduced me to the joy of conducting research, particularly qualitative research. Secondly, the continuous emergence of new and unexpected answers throughout the research process brought about a sense of stimulation and excitement, allowing me to deeply appreciate the charm of academic research. Lastly, completing this research from start to finish has given me a sense of accomplishment. I sincerely hope that my findings will prove beneficial to the field of IS in China, as well as sports translation and the operation of future IS works.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A: Consent form for interviews

### **The title of the research**

The title of the research is: A translation of various lenses - an exploration of translation behaviours among translators and proofreading editors in the Information Service in Mega Sports Events in China. Thank you for extending the invitation to participate in the research project. Before making a decision, it is crucial to comprehend the purpose of the research and the nature of involvement. Please take a moment to carefully read the provided information. If any aspects are unclear or if additional information is needed, feel free to inquire. You are encouraged to discuss this with others if you wish. Take the necessary time to make an informed decision about whether or not you would like to participate.

### **What is the purpose of the research**

Your participation in this project is integral to my PhD thesis, which focuses on analyzing translation behaviours and strategies within the information service of mega sports events in China. The project aims to explore your experiences as an expert and your past encounters with translation in this context. Specifically, the research seeks to uncover the translation strategies employed in previous information service projects in China to compile a concise summary for guiding future information service endeavors. Your insights will contribute significantly to enhancing our understanding of effective translation practices in this domain. If you have any questions or require further clarification, please feel free to ask before deciding on your participation.

### **Reasons for participating**

You've been selected for this research based on your background in information services and translation. Your expertise in both areas makes you an ideal candidate to provide detailed and valuable data for our study, especially considering the limited number of experts in

translation within the information service field.

Willings for participation

### **Are there any risk**

From the researcher's perspective, participating in this research poses no risks or potential hazards. Your anonymity is guaranteed, and interviews will be conducted individually without external interference. The questions will not touch on political matters or elicit politically sensitive responses. Ultimately, the decision to participate is entirely yours. If you choose to join, you will receive and can retain this information sheet (along with signing a consent form), and you retain the option to withdraw at any time without consequences, without needing to provide a reason. Your data can be withdrawn until the point of transcription and anonymization of the audio recordings.

### **How to protect the confidentiality of the participants**

Participants will undergo individual interviews, ensuring confidentiality. Personal details won't be disclosed in subsequent interviews. Audio recordings, if shared or archived, will undergo sound processing to prevent voice recognition. Additionally, interview transcripts, particularly those with discussed examples, will be stored as password-protected files, enhancing the overall security and privacy of the collected data.

### **What are the procedures of the research**

If you choose to participate in this research, you will initially receive a set of interview questions. You have the option to withdraw if any questions make you uncomfortable. Should you decide to continue, a scheduled interview will take place. Following the interview, the audio recording will be transcribed into written form, and you have the opportunity to review the transcription if desired. During the data analysis phase, discussions with the researcher will occur regarding subthemes and quotes relevant to the research. Your input is crucial in ensuring accuracy. You will also be invited to verify the accuracy of the researcher's translations of your interview responses. Ultimately, you will have the chance to discuss the research results with the researcher and freely express your opinions. Your participation in this research is greatly valued.

### **Can I quit during the research ?**

You have the freedom to withdraw from the research at any stage, and upon your decision to quit, all data related to your participation will be promptly erased. This ensures that none of your information will be utilized in the ongoing research. Your autonomy and choice to discontinue involvement are fully respected throughout the entirety of the study.

### **What will happen to the research result**

Rest assured that all information gathered about you throughout this research will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. Your identity will remain undisclosed in any reports or publications. The data collected from you will be utilized exclusively within the scope of my PhD, and it may contribute to various academic papers. Importantly, none of your personal details will ever be disclosed. The research findings will focus on generating ideas and key points derived from the overall interview data on a large scale, ensuring that no personal data is presented or exposed.

### **Contact for further information**

If you have any further questions concerning this research or the procedure of this research, feel free to contact me via email: [sindriguo@foxmail.com](mailto:sindriguo@foxmail.com)

### **Consent Form**

This is the consent form for participants of the research titled “A translation of various lenses - an exploration of translation behaviours among translators and proofreading editors in the Information Service in Mega-Sports Events in China” by Zheng Guo, please choose to click or not click ✓ in the form below:

I acknowledge that I have read and comprehended the participant information sheet pertaining to the aforementioned research project and have had the	
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opportunity to seek clarification by asking any questions.	
I acknowledge that my participation in this research is voluntary, and I have the freedom to withdraw my involvement up to the point of anonymization of the data, without the need to provide a reason and without facing any adverse consequences. Furthermore, I understand that I have the right to decline to answer any specific question(s) if I choose to do so.	
I grant permission for members of the research team to access my anonymized responses. I am aware that my name will not be associated with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in any reports resulting from the research.	
I acknowledge that the interview will be recorded. I understand that both identity data and my response data will be encrypted, and only the researcher and their supervisors will have access to it.	
I comprehend that the information I provide may be utilized in subsequent research or alongside the current research project.	

Signature:

Date:

## **Appendix B: List of codes and the graphic representation of codes, subthemes, and themes**

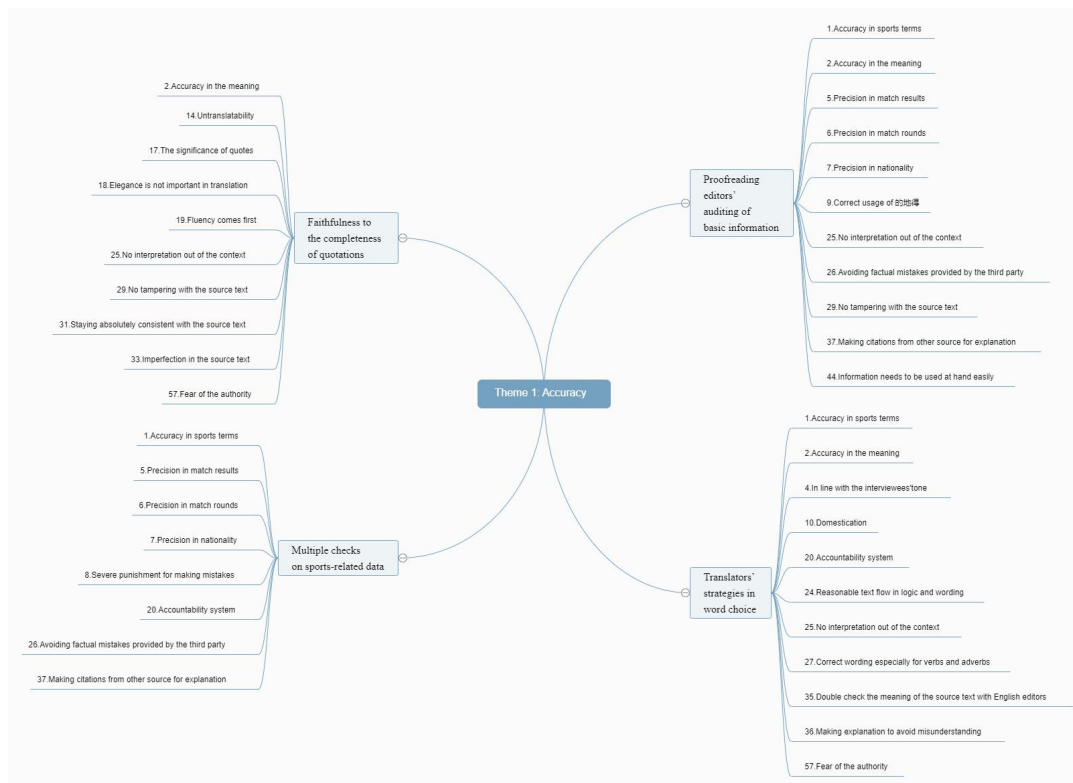
### **List of initial codes generated from the data**

1. Accuracy in sports terms
2. Accuracy in the meaning
3. Accuracy to avoid misunderstanding
4. In line with the interviewees' tone
5. Precision in match results
6. Precision in match rounds
7. Precision in nationality
8. Severe punishment for making mistakes
9. Correct usage of 的地得
10. Domestication
11. Foreignization
12. Ambiguous usage of domestication & foreignization
13. English for special purposes
14. Untranslatability
15. Anotation
16. Borrowing
17. The significance of quotes
18. Elegance is not important in translation
19. Fluency comes first
20. Accountability system
21. English is the official working language
22. Speed over quality in translation
23. Sports-flavour in the target text
24. Reasonable text flow in logic and wording
25. No interpretation out of the context
26. Avoiding factual mistakes provided by the third party
27. Correct wording especially for verbs and adverbs
28. A complete translation of the whole source text
29. No tampering with the source text
30. Avoiding missing newsworthy information
31. Staying absolutely consistent with the source text
32. Source text is the model
33. Imperfection in the source text
34. Second-hand translation
35. Double check the meaning of the source text with English editors
36. Making explanation to avoid misunderstanding

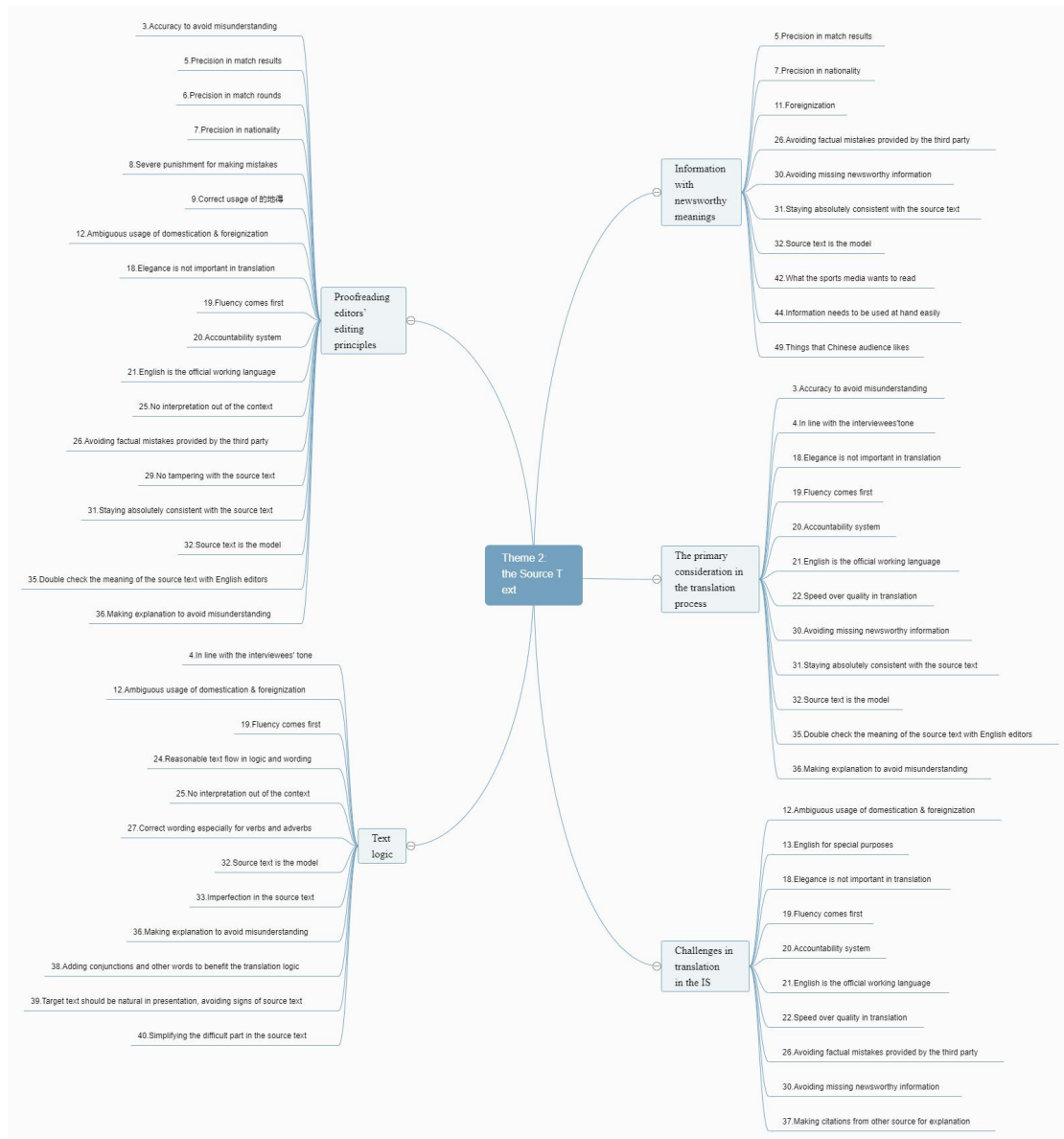
37. Making citations from other source for explanation
38. Adding conjunctions and other words to benefit the translation logic
39. Target text should be natural in presentation, avoiding signs of source text
40. Simplifying the difficult part in the source text
41. Skipping sports terms in translation
42. What the sports media wants to read
43. A platform of information for sports media to use
44. Information needs to be used at hand easily
45. Sensitive information should be screened
46. The awareness of political sensitivity
47. Experience-oriented operation on translation
48. Consideration of cultural differences
49. Things that Chinese audience likes
50. Information should be all about the competition
51. Sports competition is nationalism
52. Translation with editing
53. Translation with gatekeeping
54. Chinese culture is different
55. The organizing committee is the boss
56. The Mega Sports Event is political
57. Fear of the authority
58. Detestation and reluctance to deal with sensitive information
59. Information that the public wants to read
60. Making the translation political / sensitive free
61. To make everyone happy



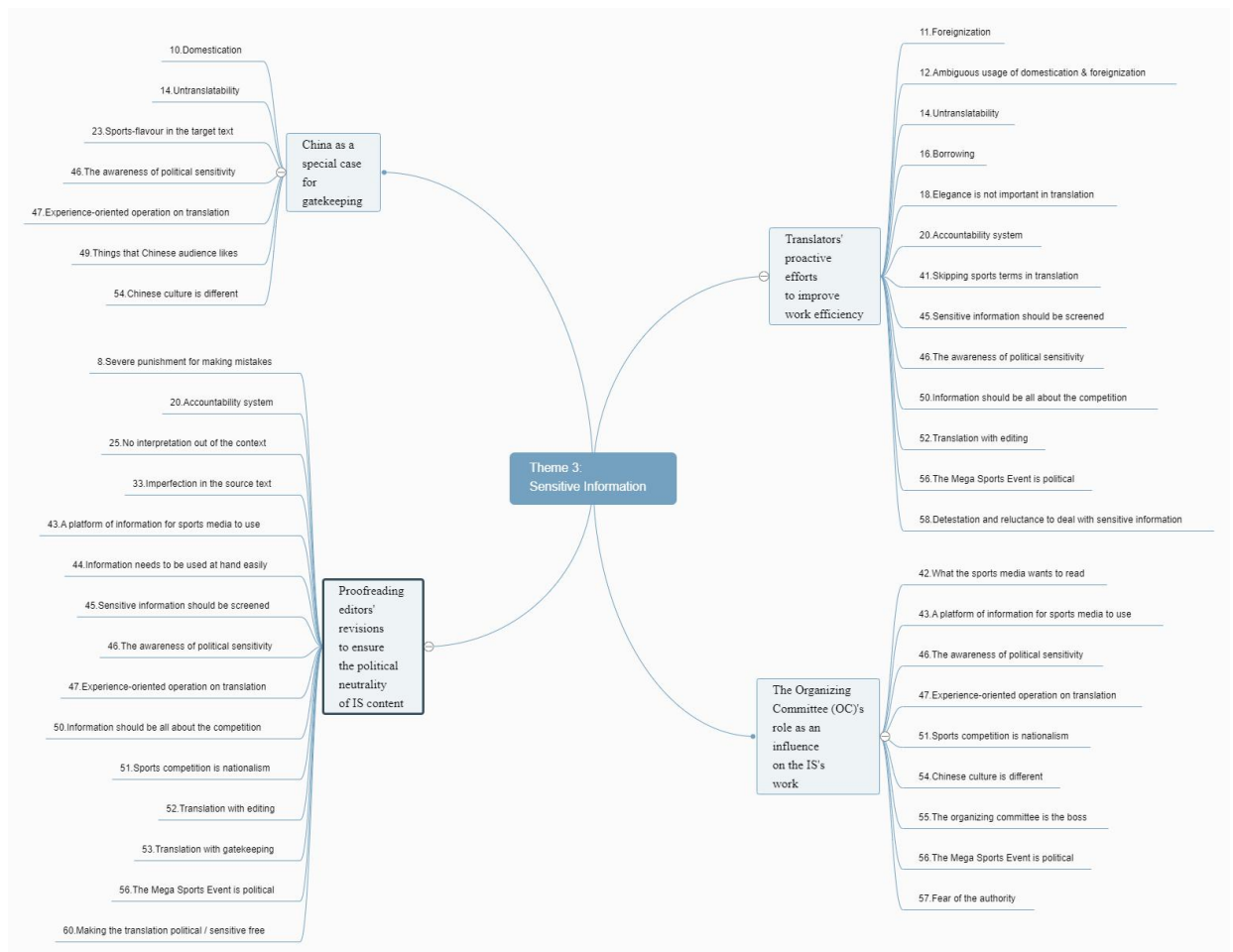
## Graphic representation of theme 1



## Graphic representation of theme 2



## Graphic representation of theme 3



## Graphic representation of theme 4

