

Translating for Rebutting: Paratextual Framing in the Chinese Translations of *The Rape of Nanking*

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Abstract: First published in America in 1997, *The Rape of Nanking* by Chinese-American writer Iris Chang became a controversial bestseller. It met with scathing criticisms from some American and Japanese historians. Aware of that, Chinese translators and publishers of the book add various paratexts to rebut those criticisms. Using the theory of narrative framing as elaborated by Baker (2006), this study examines the paratextual framing strategies employed in the Chinese translations of the book, before which the contentions surrounding the original are presented. It is found that by means of spatial/temporal framing, selective appropriation and positioning, the target texts frame the author Chang as what American and Japanese critics think she is not. This study shows that paratexts can serve as a site for discursive confrontation, where new narratives can be introduced to counter pre-existent ones and engage in a competition for guiding readers' perception of the text.

Keywords: Paratext, Narrative, Framing, *The Rape of Nanking*, China

1. INTRODUCTION

The Nanking Massacre is one of the most horrendous of its kind, committed by Japanese army in 1937 in the then China's capital, Nanking. The barbarism and inhumanity of the massacre is no less shocking than the Holocaust. But unfortunately, compared with the Holocaust, the Nanking Massacre is much less known internationally. In order for this human tragedy to receive due attention from beyond China, or beyond East Asia for that matter, Iris Chang, a Chinese-American writer, decided to write a book in English about the massacre. To find what actually happened in Nanking, she went there to interview survivors and consult scholars. Chang also frequented libraries to search for relevant historical documents and archives. Finally in 1997, the 70th anniversary of the Nanking Massacre, Chang completed and published the book *The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II*.

This book proved an immediate success with general readers and it didn't take long to top the New York Times Book List. Almost overnight, the author became a household name and was invited to give lectures around the world. The book also receives much attention from scholars and critics. But here, it has to be pointed out, the reception is a mixed one. More importantly, it evokes heated debates among countries that are in some way related to war crimes of Japan during World War II.

The reaction the book sparks is particularly intense in East Asia, which is partly clear from the fact that it has been translated and retranslated into Chinese, Korean and Japanese. Given that the book is highly relevant to China, it comes as no surprise that the book has been translated into Chinese several times. Interestingly, however, a comparison between the source text (hereafter ST) and the target text (hereafter TT) shows that what the Chinese translators do is more than just translate. Instead, by adding paratexts of various kinds, the Chinese translators actively respond to the considerable controversy surrounding the book. The present study aims to show what strategies the Chinese translators employ to reframe conflicting narratives around the book *The Rape of Nanking*.

This study begins with an overview of how narrative theory can be and has been applied in translation studies. In the data section, we will give a summary of the contentions concerning the original and an introduction to different versions of its Chinese translations. After that, the framing strategies employed in the translational paratexts will be presented and reasons behind analyzed.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMWORK

Traditionally, translation studies were more language-oriented, and scholars took it as their main job to identify where and how the ST and TT diverge linguistically, with a view to making translations more faithful and accurate. Later on, this approach came under increasing criticism for being too reductive and gradually it gave way to a more productive and more culture-oriented approach, which is known as the cultural turn of translation studies (Lefevere, 1992; Toury, 1995). As a result, more emphasis is placed upon the cultural, social, ideological and political factors that influence translation processes and products. No longer are translators taken as passive, unemotional and truly neutral (Hermans, 1996; Venuti, 1998). Quite the contrary, translators are regarded more as active participants in cultural mediation. The presence of translators in TT is something inevitable and the invisibility of translators is neither possible nor advisable (Berman, 1984; Venuti, 1995).

The translator's role as an active cultural mediator is especially clear and relevant in controversy- or conflict-associated translation activities. Here, Baker's approach of applying narrative theory to translation studies proves workable and highly fruitful. According to the narrative theory, "it is through narrativity that we come to know, understand, and make sense of the social world, and it is through narratives and narrativity that we constitute our social identities" (Somers, 1992: 600). In a similar vein, Baker (2007: 155) defines narratives as "stories that we come to subscribe to—believe in or at least contemplate as potentially valid—and that therefore shape our behaviour towards other people and the events in which we are embedded".

Narrative, it is maintained, is constructed in nature (White, 1987; Somers and Gibson, 1994; Baker, 2006). The nature of constructedness make it possible that about an event, there may circulate several different narratives and each claims to be the only "truth". Also, the constructedness of narratives allows room for translators and interpreters to maneuver. Translators and interpreters thus can act as narrators. As Baker (2006: 105) puts it, "translators and interpreters — in collaboration with publishers, editors and other agents involved in the interaction — accentuate, undermine or modify aspects of the narrative(s) encoded in the source text or utterance". Tymoczko (2006: 447) too observes that translation should be taken as "a metastatement, a statement about the source text". While in full agreement with that, we further argue that translators and interpreters can accentuate, undermine or modify narratives not only in but about or around the ST. This is particularly true in the case of controversial translation assignments, where depending on their stance, translators can choose either to challenge or to echo contested narratives about the ST.

Corresponding to the four features of narrativity, Baker (2006) summarizes four major strategies of narrative framing that translators usually resort to, namely temporal/spatial framing, selective appropriation, labelling and positioning. For translators, both texts and paratexts can serve as sites for framing. Though there have been numerous researches about text-based framing in translation, much ground remains untapped when it comes to paratext-based framing. According to Genette (1987/1997: xviii), paratext refers to that which "mediate the book to the reader: titles and subtitles, pseudonym, forewords, dedications, epigraphs, prefaces, intertitles, notes, epilogues and afterwards". Paratexts are important in that they can influence how readers perceive texts, even before the reading actually begins. The same holds true for the translated texts. And it's even safe to say that paratext is where translators' presence is most visible and where most translational intervention happens. After all, it is usually through paratexts such as footnotes and prefaces that translators directly convey their messages to target readers. Therefore, the paratexts of translations merit special scholarly attention.

In what follows, by applying narrative theory, we will identify framing strategies adopted by the Chinese translators and publishers of *The Rape of Nanking*. The aims that these strategies are designed to achieve will also be elaborated. And before that, some explanation about the controversies involving this book and its different Chinese versions is necessary.

3. DATA

So far, there are a total of five Chinese translations of *The Rape of Nanking*. The first came out in the same year as the English original. It was translated by Xiao Fuyuan and published by a Taiwan-based publishing house. Months later, in April 1998 its first China-Mainland translation appeared. As can be easily understood, the first two translations did not in any way respond to the controversies about the original, because they came out before the controversies truly began. Years later, the book was retranslated three times in China Mainland and the retranslations were published in 2005, 2007 and

2013(hereafter TT2005, TT2007 and TT2013 respectively). The three retranslations are similar in that all of them, though to differing degrees, choose to rebut accusations against the original by adding paratexts. Therefore, the three China-Mainland retranslations comprise the data for the present study. Before we go on, it's necessary to have an overview of the accusations against *The Rape of Nanking*.

In *The Rape of Nanking*, the author shows to the world the atrocities committed by Japanese army during the six-week occupation of Nanking, such as live burials, indiscriminate killing of civilians, decapitation contests by Japanese officers, rapes and mutilations. As can be foreseen, the book caused great outrage in Japan. The then Japanese ambassador to U.S. Saito Kunihiko called it a distortion of history, to which Chinese side gave a sharp response. Besides, the book's Japanese translation was first negotiated but then not allowed. Meanwhile, Japan critics are joined by some American historians in accusing the book of being inaccurate, misleading and exaggerating. Their main accusations about the book can be summed up as follows:

1. Iris Chang is not thought qualified as a historian and is therefore not the right person to write on this topic. A much-debated question is about Chang's qualifications, or lack thereof, to be a historian. American sinologist Fogel (1998: 818) maintains that "the book begins to fall apart when she tries to explain why such a horror took place. Part of the problem is her lack of training as a historian and part is the book's dual aim as passionate polemic and dispassionate history". American historian Jeans (2005: 149-150) describes Chang's book as "half-baked history" and the reason, as he sees it, is that "she is not a trained historian".

2. Some argue that the sources cited by Chang are questionable and her investigation approach problematic. For instance, Fogel (1998: 818) writes that the book is "full of misinformation and harebrained explanation" and that "the author apparently believes everything her many informants tell her; there is little sifting of information from her interviewees". San Francisco Chronicle staff writer Burrell (1998) criticizes Chang for quoting as "compelling evidence" a secret telegram by Japan's foreign minister, which was actually written by someone else. Jeans(2005:150) accuses Chang of "greatly inflating the population of Nanjing (Nanking) at that time and uncritically accepting Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal and contemporary Chinese figures for the numbers of Chinese civilians and soldiers killed".

3. Ultraright Japanese scholars describe *The Rape of Nanking* as anti-Japan propaganda. In 2000, Japanese scholar Masaaki Tanaka had a book of his own translated into English and published in Tokyo, which is titled *What Really Happened in Nanking: The Refutation of a Common Myth* and in which he explicitly denies the Nanking Massacre. Actually the original Japanese edition of the book was completed in 1987. Publishing its English version right at this time is obviously intended to challenge *The Rape of Nanking*. To that end, Tanaka adds a long introduction to the English version. In the introduction, Tanaka alleges that *The Rape of Nanking* represents one of the several efforts by Chang to instigate anti-Japan campaigns and the book is characterized by "lies, hyperbole, and propaganda" (Tanaka, 2000: iv).

4. Some critics charge that Chang is wrong in saying that Japan refuses to acknowledge and apologize for their atrocities in Nanking and is trying to erase this chapter from human memory. (Kennedy, 1998; Efron, 1999)

In next section, we will elaborate on the framing strategies employed by the Chinese translators and publishers to rebut each of the above-mentioned narratives.

4. FRAMING STRATEGIES IN THE TARGET TEXTS

1. Temporal/Spatial framing

According to Baker (2006: 112), temporal and spatial framing means "selecting a particular text and embedding it in a temporal and spatial context that accentuates the narrative it depicts and encourages us to establish links between it and current narratives that touch our lives". In the paratexts of the translations under study, such framing strategies are employed more than once. For example, in the prefaces written by Chang's mother for TT2007 and TT2013, we find the following passages:

1) PARATEXTS (Publishers' prefaces)

这本书在美国出版后，本来一家日本出版社要出本书的日文版，但消息传出后，日本右翼势力

不断地威胁这家出版社，该出版社经不起右翼势力的威胁，因此妥协，……这也从一个侧面印证了本书所说的日本对这段历史真相的控制。

[Shortly after its publication, a publisher in Japan wanted to have this book translated into Japanese. But on hearing the news, ultraright Japanese activists repeatedly threatened the publisher and the latter finally yielded. ... That partly evidences Japan's attempt to suppress the truth about this episode of history, as is written in the book.]

(Chang, 2007: 3)

例如2005年，当日本想进入联合国安全理事会成为常任理事国时，……全球网民在短短几周内征集了数千万签名，向联合国请愿，成功地阻止了日本野心得逞。很多文章及新闻报道都提到日本没有资格进入联合国安理会的原因，就是日本仍然没有真诚地为“二战”中的战争罪行道歉

[For instance, in 2005 when Japan wanted to be admitted as a permanent member in the UN Security Council, netizens around the world managed to collect tens of millions of signatures, petitioning against Japan's ambition and they succeeded. Many articles and news reports referred to Japan's refusal to apologize for war crimes in World War II as disqualifications for it to enter the UN Security Council]

(Chang, 2013: xiii)

These two paratextual narratives are about events that happened in a different frame, both spatially and temporally, from the narratives in the source text. But for Chinese publishers, such narratives are necessary and important, because they can challenge the narratives against the source text's credibility. As has been mentioned, some American historians argued that Japan never attempted to suppress truths about the Nanking Massacre and Chang's accusation of Japan's refusal of the massacre was exaggerated. As a response, the first paratext is selected to show Japan's reluctance to allow the circulation of narratives about the Nanking Massacre and the reluctance is further framed as "Japan's attempt to suppress the truth". By comparison, the second paratext is more powerful in that it brings in the *global* reaction to Japan's attitude towards their doings in World War II. Here, "global netizens" become the representatives of the international community. In so doing, Japan is not just put against China, but against the whole world. It is implied that not China alone, but the international community is indignant about Japan's refusal to apologize for its war crimes in World War II, which, of course, include the Nanking Massacre.

2. Selective Appropriation

Selective appropriation involves "omission and addition designed to suppress, accentuate or elaborate particular aspects of a narrative"(Baker,2006: 112). As will be explained, the Chinese publishers and translators of *The Rape of Nanking* achieve selective appropriation mainly through addition of paratextual materials.

2) SOURCE TEXT

"Immediately after memorial services, I assembled the higher officers and wept tears of anger before them," Matsui told his Buddhist confessor before his hanging in 1948. "Both prince Asaka and Lieutenant General Yanagawa ...were there. I told them everything had been lost in one moment through the brutalities of the soldiers. And can you imagine it, even after that, those soldiers laughed at me." (Chang, 1997: 52)

PARATEXT (Footnote)

作者显然对松井寄予了某种同情。这也说明作者并非像某些人说的那样是反日分子，而是根据自己掌握的资料形成自己的看法。

[Here it is apparent that the author showed empathy with Matsui. This indicates that the author is not an anti-Japan activist as someone accuses. Instead, she always bases her views on archives she has access to.]

(Chang, 2007: 59)

By adding the footnote, the translator activates an opposing narrative about the author Chang's integrity. Japanese scholar Tanaka accused *The Rape of Nanking* of being anti-Japan propaganda. But the translator argues here that Chang's indignation is targeted only at the perpetrators of brutalities and Chang is not someone who indiscriminately opposes Japan or anything Japanese, as can be evidenced by the fact that "the author showed empathy with Matsui", who was one of few Japanese that showed remorse for the Nanking Massacre. The footnote also frames Chang as neutral and free from national prejudice.

3) PARATEXT (Translator's postscript)

张纯如从来没有称自己是历史学家，也没有将自己的书称为“学术专著”。她称自己为作家，给自己书的定位是“非小说体的专著”，……所谓的非小说体专著，就是没有任何虚构的内容。在翻译全书及核对大部分注释后，我认为张纯如完全做到了这一点。20多万字的著作，共有584个注释，书中绝大部分史实的陈述及对南京暴行的描写都有注释，说明资料来源。这完全可以与任何学术专著媲美。

[Never had Chang claimed to be a historian. Nor did she call her book an "academic monograph". She presented herself as a writer and positioned *The Rape of Nanking* as a non-fiction book. ... A non-fiction book is one where there is nothing fictional. Having translated the whole book and verified most of the notes, I'm convinced that Chang did make it nonfictional. Just imagine 584 notes for a book of 200 thousand words or so. The vast majority of the descriptions about the Nanking Massacre are annotated, with information sources indicated. All these make the book compare favorably with any academic monograph]

(Chang, 2007: 309)

After the publication of *The Rape of Nanking*, Chang's qualifications to write on such a historical subject was called into question. Knowing that Chang did not receive training as a historian, the translator does not insist on Chang's being a qualified historian. But he proposes a narrative that can equally prove Chang's legitimacy to write on this topic. The way he does that is by emphasizing the book's "academicness". Here, and elsewhere as well, the translator uses the large numbers of notes of the original to prove its "academicness". Actually, in order to make it more consistent with academic norms, the translator moves the notes to the end of corresponding chapters, instead of placing all notes together at the very end of the book as the original does. What's more, the translator contributes his own share to making it all the more academic: more than 100 translational notes are added to TT2007. The reason the translator accentuates the book's "academicness" is that to general readers, "academic" is synonymous with based-on-facts.

4) PARATEXTS (Translator's postscript)

在书中，张纯如旗帜鲜明地认为南京大屠杀人数的26万以上，但同时她也将与其观点不同的研究结论一一列出。……在注释中，她还特地完整地引用了拉贝给希特勒报告中的有关描述：“根据中国人的报告，总数约为10万的中国平民被杀害，但这一数字似乎被夸大了，我们欧洲人的估计数字为50000 - 60000之间。”

[In the book, Chang is unequivocal in believing that more than 260,000 people were killed in Nanking. But at the same time, she also lists other estimates different from her own. ... For example, in a note, she quotes the following from a report sent to Hitler by John Rabe: "According to Chinese reports, a total of 100,000 Chinese civilians were murdered. But that seems to be an over assessment—we Europeans estimate the number to be somewhere between 50,000 and 60,000.]

(Chang, 2007: 310)

1938年1月17日，日本外务大臣广田弘毅在东京将下列电报内容转发给华盛顿特区的日本大使馆，美国情报人员截获并破译了该电文，……要是一般的人，必然会将这段电报当成是论证自

己观点的铁证，因为从表面看，日本外务大臣在秘密的外交电文中自己承认有30万中国平民被屠杀（前几年中国媒体就是这么报道的）。但张纯如进一步研究了该电报的来龙去脉，并在注释中明确说明：“该电报内容最初是由《曼彻斯特卫报》记者田伯烈所写，但该电文被上海的日本新闻检查官员所扣留……”

“什么是学者？这才是真正的学者。尽管张纯如从未称自己是历史学家，但她却使许多‘历史学家’汗颜。”

[American intelligence intercepted and decoded a telegram sent to Washington DC by Japanese foreign minister Koki Hirota on January 17, 1938. It's understandably tempting to take this telegram as a compelling evidence, because it appears that Hirota admitted in the secret diplomatic telegram that some 300,000 Chinese civilians were murdered (Actually that's how Chinese media reported years ago). But Chang went to great lengths to find out the true and whole story behind the telegram and made public her findings in a note: "Manchester Guardian correspondent H. J. Timperley originally wrote this report, which was stopped by Japanese censors in Shanghai.]

[That is precisely what a true scholar should be like. Though never claiming to be a historian, Chang nevertheless dwarfs many so-called "historians"]

(Chang, 2007: 310-311)

A narrative that may shake the very foundation of the original is about how the author Iris Chang decides which historical documents are reliable. In this respect, Chang is criticized by a few American historians for taking an accepting approach to Chinese documents but ignoring documents in other languages. But the paratexts bring to readers' attention a different narrative. Take the number of victims. The first paratext demonstrates that while Chang brings forward his own estimate, she is also fully aware of other estimates and she even juxtaposes her own with those that contradict it. The translator particularly draws readers' attention to a note about victim number in the original. That may be because the note is a quote from the diary of John Rabe, a German who worked together with other internationals to establish a safety zone for people in Nanking. Chang's quoting Rabe thus shows that she does not ignore documents in languages other than Chinese.

The second paratext seems designed to respond to the above-mentioned allegation that Chang lacks the ability to screen available documents and sometime mistakes fabricated documents as authentic ones. Here, Chang is framed in quite a different light: she is prudent in quoting and capable of sifting information; she always holds a questioning and truth-seeking attitude in dealing with historical documents. Even when faced with documents that seemingly can serve as solid evidence for her argument, she remains sober and does not take them at face value. Moreover, here once again, the translator emphasizes Chang's identity as a "scholar", though the author never presented herself this way.

5) PARATEXT (Publishers' preface)

我们还要注意，有些在美国研究中国或亚洲的所谓“历史专家”其实是在日本大量的金钱资助下为日本说话的，在美国大学里有些研究中日历史的经费也是来自日本，因此他们的研究很难保持客观。

[It is also noteworthy that some so-called American "historians" are actually paid to speak in defense of Japan. Some American universities receive Japanese funds specially allocated for research into China-Japan historical relations. No wonder their researches are anything but objective.]

(Chang, 2013: xiv)

In America, *The Rape of Nanking* met a mixed reception. While some historians and reviewers think highly of it, some others think the book is seriously flawed. As is always the case, criticism travels fast and catches more attention. This is even more true, given America's capability in influencing global opinion. In other words, American historians' criticisms are more easily heard and spread. Moreover, Japanese critics often quote those American historians to support their own argument.

Under this circumstances, Chinese publishers may find it necessary to challenge the American historians. This paratextual narrative calls into question the objectivity and true motives of the American historians and even has the effect of discrediting them.

3. Positioning

According to Baker (2006: 132), positioning refers to “the way in which participants in any interaction are positioned, or position themselves, in relation to each other and to those outside the immediate event”. She maintains that “In translation and interpreting, participants can be repositioned in relation to each other and to the reader or hearer through the linguistic management of time, space, deixis, dialect, register, use of epithets, and various means of self-and other identification”. This strategy is employed in the translator’s postscript of TT2005, in which the translator reviews Iris Chang’s life and literary career. Particularly notable about this postscript is that several times, the translator calls the author not by her full name 张纯如 (Iris Chang) but only by her given name 纯如(Iris). In Chinese culture, calling someone by his or her given name is a way to show familiarity, affinity and intimacy between the two parties. Therefore, this special way of addressing gives the impression that the translator and Chang are familiar with each other. This constructed closeness helps lend credibility to the translator’s narrative in the paratext. Also, it can produce the effect of shortening psychological distance with the target readers and thus establishing trust with them.

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

As has been accepted as common sense, translation never happens in vacuum. Rather, translation is always deeply embedded in social, cultural and political contexts. Transparent translation free from the impact of external forces is something virtually impossible. Instead, in most cases, *intervention* seems to be the rule of translation. Generally, translational intervention can be achieved by two different means. One can either rewrite the text or modify the paratext. Rewriting text seems more effortless and effective, but it is easy to incur criticisms. That’s because by comparing the ST and the TT, target readers can easily identify discrepancies between them and arbitrary text addition or omission on the part of translators is likely to leave them open to charges of being unfaithful or irresponsible. This way, the translators involved (and very often the publisher as well) may be discredited. Fully aware of and concerned about this risk, many translators are cautious to be textually faithful.

Paratext modification is comparatively a more implicit and easy-to-accept way of guiding target readers, because replacing the cover, writing an introduction, adding some blurbs or inserting some notes doesn’t appear as invasive as rewiring text per se. Translators and publishers can convey their messages just as clearly while keeping the text intact at the same time. In this respect, Chinese translations of *The Rape of Nanking* show to us how it works.

This study demonstrates that the paratext can be taken as a site for discursive confrontation, where alternative narratives can be introduced to counter pre-existent ones and engage in a competition for guiding readers’ perception of the text. As is shown in the previous sections, Chinese translators and publishers don’t rest content with just translating what is described in *The Rape of Nanking*. They also hope to take the opportunity to rebut the accusations against this book and paratexts here act as a platform for rebutting. While American and Japanese historians accused Chang of lacking the training as a historian, being anti-Japan and not properly screening information, Chinese translators and publishers frame Iris Chang quite the other way around. By adding prefaces, postscripts and notes, they bring in some narratives to challenge the allegations against Iris Chang and her book. In a sense, these translational narratives are necessary, because they represent some different voices and can at least offer target readers some new perspectives to approach the text. Target readers can judge for themselves about the book, instead of unquestioningly taking the criticisms of the book as justified.

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Citation: Min He. "Translating for Rebutting: Paratextual Framing in the Chinese Translations of *The Rape of Nanking*" *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature (IJSELL)*, vol 9, no. 9, 2021, pp. 1-8. doi: <https://doi.org/10.20431/2347-3134.0909001>.

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