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Table of Contents

Oral Poetry: Exposition of Selected Yoruba Lullabies	1
	Sunday Michael OYELEKE
Aesthetic Pursuit and Cultural Metaphor of Piano Music Based on Traditional Chinese Culture	8
	Bo Lyu
The English Translation of Indeterminacies in Tao Yuanming's Poetry from the Perspective of Reception Aesthetics Theory.....	14
	Yushan CEN
A Corpus-based Contrastive Analysis of Sino-U.S. National Defense White Papers: Images, Problems and Strategies.....	23
	Lan WANG, Junchao WANG
Chinese-English Translation Strategies of Children's Picture Books from the Perspective of Multimodality —A Case Study of <i>The Monkey King</i> Series.....	39
	Qian CUI, Jian LI
On C-E Translation Strategies of Corporate Publicizing Video Based on Variational Translation Theory: A Communication Science Perspective	50
	Yaxiong XU, Jie LYU
Localization and Cultural Adaptation of Museum Websites: A Case of the Chinese Website of The British Museum	58
	Jiaxing HU

Oral Poetry: Exposition of Selected Yoruba Lullabies

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Abstract

The beauty of poetry is fully achieved when presented in the oral form. However, many poets nowadays seem to be engrossed in the written form only, giving little or no credence to the oral form –whose absence arguably invalidates poetic aesthetics as meter, tone, rhyme and rhythm, just to mention a few. Hence, this study captures selected lullabies in their oral art form through audio recording before transcribing and translating them to the written form in this paper. This study basically describes some Yoruba lullabies as a form of oral poetry and how they function in the Yoruba sociocultural structure. It adopts both quantitative and qualitative methods by using two field agents as active participants who interviewed and collected six lullabies from two aged Yoruba women (in Ibadan, Oyo state and Ikire, Osun state) as a representation of the Yoruba society; and consulting conceptual materials from books in libraries and on the cyberspace. Using the functionalist theory as hermeneutics, it assesses the contribution of lullabies to the maintenance of the Yoruba culture and social structure as it is today. This study aims to add to the existing knowledge in the lore of oral poetry in general, and translation of selected Yoruba lullabies precisely.

Keywords: Orature, oral poetry, lullaby, Translation, Yoruba

1. Introduction

This study basically describes socio-cultural significances of selected Yoruba lullabies as they are today in their oral poetic form, using the functionalist praxis. It is pertinent to describe some key concepts as “orature”, oral poetry, lullaby and translation that serve as background to this study. The term “Orature” is an uncommonly used term that was coined by the Ugandan linguist Pio Zirimu to replace the widely used oxymoronic term “Oral Literature” or other common terms as Verbal Art, Unwritten Literature, Non-Written Literature, Folklore, Traditional Literature etc. However, this study subscribes to the use of the term “Orature” because it posits the term is less ambiguous compared to other terms. According to Zirimu, “orature is a term generally applied to spoken literary tradition such as folktales, folklore, musical theatre, proverbs, riddles, live history, epic poem and historical recitation”. For Zirimu, it refers to any art form that is passed orally or presented by word of mouth.

Another renowned scholar, Ruth Finnegan also describes orature by choosing the term “Oral literature” which “is by definition dependent on a performer who formulates it in words on a specific occasion –there is no other way in which it can be realized as a literary product”. Finnegan (1970a) further makes the distinction between “the actual creation of a written literary form and its further transmission.” She asserts that oral literature differs because there is much more intimate nexus in the transmission. She argues that the written literature has an independent and tangible existence in a single copy that other written copies may be treated as secondary. But the case of oral literature is different because the questions about the channels of actual communication are of utmost importance and the oral art form cannot easily be argued to possess any continued or independent existence without its oral realization and direct performance by a singer or speaker (Finnegan, 1970a).

Oral poetry is a genre of Orature that deals with poetry that is composed (often communally owned as against individual authorship found in written poetry) and transmitted through the words of mouth without the aid of writing. Oral poetry in Africa, Nigeria and in the Yoruba society to be specific, are often songs that delineate the whole range of human activities and experiences – in forms of praise and merriment, amusement and entertainment, love and loss; works songs and protest songs, just to mention a few. Subcategories of oral poetry are, but not limited to lullabies, panegyrics, elegies, odes, proverbs, riddles, and work songs.

A lullaby is a cradlesong or a soothing poem that is sung to make children calm or soothe them to sleep. The purpose of lullaby varies. Lullaby in the Yoruba society is not only used to calm or lull babies to sleep but may also serve as a supplication and a medium to transmit cultural norms and tradition. Similarly, Finnegan in one of her essays “Topical and Political Songs” (1970b), buttresses that:

Songs can be used to report and comment on current affairs, for political pressure, for propaganda and how to reflect and mould public opinion. This political and topical function can be an aspect of many of the types of poetry already discussed –work songs, lyric, praise poetry, even at times something as simple as a lullaby (Finnegan, 1970b).

Similarly, Uwemedimo (2009) describes, “like other forms of poetry, Nigerian lullabies stand up to the staked for poetry as contributive in value to health and the growth of literature and language”. According to T.S. Eliot also cited by Thompson

and then Uwemedimo, “the poetry of a people takes its life from the people’s speech and in turn gives life to it”. This submission has largely been given support by the sample of lullabies presented in this study.

Translation, as a concept, defies a precise definition. There is a common perception that translation is an inferior copy of the original which is often considered as superior. There is however an uncommon line of thought that gives prominence to translation as a kind of reincarnation of the original. The famous deconstructionist, Jacques Derrida espouses this line of thought by suggesting that translation becomes the original effectively (Bassnett, & Lefevere, 1998, Hermans, 2013). This paper therefore aligns with this assumption that the reader accesses the original through translation. In other words, the translation can transform to the reader’s original. The layman’s description of translation can be putting or repeating what is in one language into another language. It is the act of transmitting meaning from one language to another. In the words of George Steiner in *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation*, “All acts of communication are acts of translation.” This foregrounds the notion that translation works in an interwoven way in speech, movement, interpretation etc. According to Schulte (2012), there is seldom a daily activity without some form of translation. Schulte (2012) extends the description by positing that verbal, visual, and musical interpretations must be regarded as acts of translation. This paper has therefore translated some Yoruba lullabies into English in order to expand the reader’s ability to explore through oral poetry the thoughts and culture of the Yoruba society. Translation is no doubt relevant for any civilization and allows the reader to enjoy the transformation of the strange into the familiar.

This study observes little credence has been given to describing lullaby when compared to other oral poetry forms as proverbs, elegies, panegyrics etc. in the Yoruba society. This statement of the research problem can be reinstated in Finnegan’s undiluted words in one of her essays, “Children’s Songs and Rhymes” (Finnegan, 1970b). She observes that “Little systematic interest has been taken in children’s verse in Africa”. Therefore, to foreground the data presentation and analysis of the object of enquiry, this study briefly describes its methodology, theoretical frame, geographical cum historical descriptions of the Yoruba in Southwestern Nigeria. The study also reveals the problems encountered during the field work and provides possible recommendations to guide prospective researchers interested in this or similar research.

1.1 *Geographical Description of South Western Nigeria*

South West Nigeria encompasses six states: Oyo, Osun, Ogun, Ondo, Ekiti, and Lagos. It is mainly a Yoruba inhabited area, with different dialects within each state.

The South-West Nigeria is endowed with a wide range of natural sights such as the springs in Osun State, the historic city of Ibadan, the mountain caves of Ogun State, the beaches in Lagos, just to highlight a few. Its climatic conditions changes between the two distinct seasons in Nigeria; the rainy and the dry season. The rainy season usually falls from March to November, while the dry season is usually from November to February. The dry season comes with Harmattan dust, cold and dry winds while the rainy season brings wet lands (Destination Nigeria Navigation, 2021).

1.2 *Brief Historical Description of the Yoruba*

Yoruba is one of the three major ethnicities in Nigeria that dominate the Southwestern region. However, it is pertinent to note that not only that many Yoruba people can be found scattered all over the 36 states of Nigeria, many Yorubas can also be found as natives of other countries as Benin, Togo, Sierra Leone as well as communities in Brazil and Cuba (Sadovsky, 1999).

On one hand, most Yoruba men are skilled farmers of yams, corn and millet as staples, plantains, peanuts, beans, and peas as subsidiary crops, while cocoa as a major cash crop. Some of them are traders or craftsmen. On the other hand, most Yoruba women control much of the complex market system –Yoruba women’s status depends more on their own position in the market place than on their husbands’ status (Sadovsky, 1999).

The Yoruba people have traditionally been known to be among the productive craftsmen of Africa. The people engage in such occupations as weaving of thick fabric (*Aso Ofi*), ivory and wood carving, blacksmithing, leatherworking, and glassmaking etc. Their women are notable in cotton spinning, basketry and dyeing.

The Yoruba people are disputably never a single political unit despite they have shared a common language and culture for centuries. There is the historical belief that the Yoruba people migrated from the East to their present region in the West of the lower Niger River, more than a millennium ago (Britannica, 2022). Their lands were widely regarded to be among the most developed African towns of precolonial times. They established many kingdoms of various sizes, and each of them was centralized in a capital town and administered by a monarch known as the *Oba* in Yoruba parlance. The towns became highly crowded and eventually evolved into such modern day cities as Oyo, Ibadan, Lagos, Ile-Ife, Ilesha, Ilorin, Ijebu-Ode, Ikere-Ekiti, and others.

Oyo grew, in the 17th century, into the largest Yoruba kingdom with Ile-Ife serving as a town for potent religious relevance and the origin of creation of the earth, according to the Yoruba myth. As it is today, many Yoruba people are either Christians or Muslims, although some remain animists with aspects of the traditional religion still in practice. The Yoruba language has

extensively developed in both oral and written forms/genres. Kinds of Yoruba oral poetry include lullabies, panegyrics, proverbs, epics, threnodies, work songs etc.

1.3 Methodology

This research has combined both the quantitative and qualitative approaches in gathering its data in order to generate an in-depth analysis. In its quantitative approach, six Yoruba lullabies have been collected as samples to describe the lullabies of the Yoruba society. The six lullabies have been collected from two aged Yoruba women as respondents –Mrs Esther Seun (51 years old) and Mrs Funke Sanusi (65 years old) from Ikire Osun State, and Ibadan Oyo State respectively. Through phone calls, the researcher has sorted the services of two fieldworkers –Ibrahim Nureni and Afeez Ajetunmobi who interviewed the two respondents, using a research template provided by the researcher.

In its qualitative approach, the researcher has widely borrowed concepts in literary discourses and consulted books and academic papers in libraries and on the internet. And, all works used are duly acknowledged as in-text citation and in references.

1.4 Hermeneutical Frame: Functionalism

Functionalism, as a set of theoretical principles emanated from anthropology in the early twentieth century. Bronishaw Malinowski, and A.R. Radcliffe-Brown are influential figures that contributed to the rise of functionalism. Functionalist theory is thus a counter criticism to the perceived demerits of the evolutionist and diffusionist schools of thought of the nineteenth century as well as the historicism of the early twentieth (Goldschmidt 1996, 510). According to Porth Eric et al., “two versions of functionalism developed between 1910 and 1930: Malinowski’s biological (or psychological) functionalism and structural-functionalism, the approach advanced by Radcliffe-Brown”.

Functionalist approach is presented as a novel paradigm and opposition to what was perceived to be outdated ideologies. The approach attempts to separate its principles from those of the evolutionists and the diffusionists that are common in American and British cultural studies at the turn from nineteenth to twentieth century (Lesser 1985, Langness 1987, Porth et al, 2009). According to Porth et. al., “there was a shift in focus from the speculatively historical or diachronic study of customs and cultural traits as ‘survivals’ to the ahistorical, synchronic study of the social institutions within bounded functioning societies” (Porth et al., 2009).

Functionalists postulate their theoretical leanings and methodologies as a way to extend sociocultural inquiry beyond the circumscriptions of the evolutionist assumption of social history. The evolutionists posit cultural behaviors as residual artifacts of cultural history. They further assert that an examined cultural fact is seen in terms of what it stands for in reference to what has formerly been the case, and not seen in term of what it is at the time of examination (Lesser, 1985, Porth, et al., 2009). From the functionalist stand point, such earlier approaches as the evolutionist and the diffusionist give primacy to speculative assumptions over the discovery facts. Functionalists assume that the motive force of events is in their manifestations in the present. Hence, if events are to be comprehended, it is their present functioning that should be examined and recorded (Lesser, 1985).

This study is thus framed by A.R Radcliffe-Brown’s focus on social structure that submits that a “society is a system of relationships maintaining itself through cybernetic feedback, while institutions are orderly sets of relationships whose function is to maintain the society as a system”. According to Porth, et al. (2009), one of the major tenets of functionalism which this study has adopted as hermeneutical frame, is the attempt to analyze societies as they work in a single point of time, or as they work over a relatively short period of time.

Other leading proponents of functionalism include E.E Evans-Pritchard, Sir Raymond Firth, Sir Edmund Leach, Meyer Fortes, Lucy Mair, Robert K Merton, Talcoff Parsons, and Audrey Richards.

2. Exposition of Selected Yoruba Lullabies

Six Yoruba lullabies are taken as samples to describe the characteristics of oral poetry as well as its sociocultural functions as it is in the cosmology of the Yoruba people of Nigeria. These features are largely around the fact that they are sung by mothers/babysitters using their natural words of mouth and that they are all communally owned in the Yoruba society. The first two lullabies were sung and collected from Mrs Esther Seun, a 51-year old Yoruba woman from Ikire, Osun State; while the other four lullabies were sung and collected from another Yoruba woman, Mrs Funke Sanusi who is 65 years old. The following six lullabies or cradlesongs are usually sung or performed by mothers or babysitters in the Yoruba society.

Lullaby 1

Transcription in Yoruba Language	Translation in English <i>Language</i>
<i>Ta lo nan o?</i>	<i>Who beat it?</i>

<i>Omo eye</i>	<i>A young bird</i>
<i>Le'ko m'o</i>	<i>Pelt stone at it</i>
<i>K'o salo</i>	<i>Let it runaway</i>

This is a common lullaby usually sung by babysitters in the Yoruba society. It functions to soothe a crying baby to calmness. Mrs Esther Seun reveals that during the performance, the singer makes an imaginary point as if there were a bird around to attract the baby's attention to seeing the imaginary "young bird" that has come to disturb its peace. The song thus encourages the baby to throw a stone and chase away the imaginary young bird that has come to disturb its peace. This is a way of soothing a crying baby to be calm. The baby is often goggled or dangled up and down by the babysitter while performing this cradlesong which often soothe the baby to stop crying.

Lullaby 2:

Transcription in Yoruba Language	Translation in English Language
<i>Olorun ma gba emi mi</i>	<i>Owner of Heaven, don't take my life</i>
<i>Ni 'jo iyawo re</i>	<i>On your wedding day</i>
<i>Olorun ma gba emi mi</i>	<i>Owner of heaven, don't take my life</i>
<i>Ki nle se Iya omo</i>	<i>So I can witness as spouse's mother</i>
<i>Awon olowo ma wa</i>	<i>The rich will come</i>
<i>Awon olola ma wa</i>	<i>The eminent will come</i>
<i>Awon olosi si ma gbe'le won</i>	<i>The paupers will remain in their house</i>

The above lullaby functions as a supplication usually sung by a mother in a Yoruba society. The lullaby is an apostrophe to "Owner of Heaven", *Olorun* in the Yoruba parlance that means God. The poet-persona prays to God as she anticipates her baby's wedding. Through this oral poetry, the mother is able to project into her child's glorious future where wealthy and prominent personalities only attend her "baby's" nuptial ceremony. The exclusion of the poor in the invitation list, in the last line of the above poem, suggests the orison that the baby would also grow to be as wealthy and prominent as his numerous associates who would attend its wedding.

Again, lullaby, like many other sub-genres of oral poetry, is used to promote cultural identity and pass societal norms to posterity. This is delineated in the following Yoruba lullaby.

Lullaby 3:

Transcription in Yoruba Language	Translation in English Language
<i>Omo mi ni gilasi mi</i>	<i>My child is my mirror</i>
<i>Omo mi ni gilasi mi</i>	<i>My child is my mirror</i>
<i>Omo mi ni gilasi ti mo nfi w'aju</i>	<i>My child is the mirror I use to see face</i>
<i>Omo mi ni gilasi ti mo nfi riran o</i>	<i>My child is the glasses I use in seeing</i>
<i>K'aiye ma gba gilasi mi</i>	<i>Let not the evil of the world take my mirror</i>
<i>K'aiye ma gba gilasi mi lowo mi</i>	<i>Let not the evil of the world take my mirror from my hand</i>
<i>Unibasiti dara</i>	<i>University is good</i>
<i>Nibit'awon omo mi wa</i> } 2x	<i>There; my children are</i> } 2x
<i>Ibe l'omo mi yio lo</i>	<i>That's the place my child will go</i>
<i>Ori gbe omo mi de be-o</i>	<i>Fate guides my child to the place</i>

Similarly, the functions of aforementioned lullaby in the Yoruba society align to what Okot P'Bitek confirms in the Acoli cradlesongs of Northern Uganda thus:

The lullaby...from a most important introduction to the cultural and moral education of the Acoli child. As he participates in these enjoyable activities, he learns to express himself... in the poetry. He develops his sense of rhythm as he keeps time with the rest...[of the] music

and poetry of the adults. The child is plunged into the core of poetry which is the song that arises from tensions of human reactions (p'Bitek, 1974, 2).

In the same vein as P'Bitek has described above, the child in the Yoruba society is plunged into the art of poetry from birth as they listen to the rhythm, metre and rhyme embedded in the lullabies like "My Child is my mirror". The anaphora "My Child is my mirror" does not only increase the musical qualities of the poem but also used to emphasize the continuity of one generation to another generation. The second verse thus offers the hope that the child will acquire cultural and moral education at the university when he becomes an adult to continue to frontier civilization.

Lullaby 4:

Transcription in Yoruba Language	Translation in English Language
<i>Kahidi konkolo</i>	<i>Little Kahidi</i>
<i>Ile re la njo lo</i>	<i>It's your house we're dancing to</i>
<i>Odo re la njo bo</i>	<i>It's your place we're dancing from</i>
<i>O ko'le kan si okan ile, ile nla</i>	<i>You built a house over there: A big house</i>
<i>O ra moto, o r aero, ero sansan</i>	<i>You bought a car; bought machine: strong machine</i>
<i>Ko ma si oun ti 'oni ra, Kahidi</i>	<i>There's nothing you'll not buy, Kahidi</i>
<i>O to, oko mi o, o to /2x</i>	<i>Be calm, my husband, be calm/2x</i>
<i>Ti nwon nba bu iya re</i>	<i>If they insult your mother</i>
<i>Ma dahun, ma je ki won gbo</i>	<i>Don't respond; don't let them hear</i>
<i>Ti nwon nba bu iya baba re</i>	<i>If they insult your father's mother</i>
<i>Ma dahun, ma je ki won gbo</i>	<i>Don't respond; don't let them hear</i>

This lullaby is sung antiphonally, which is typical of most African songs that incorporate responsive singing. This song is usually performed by two or more babysitters as the singing is split into two parts to create a harmony. Like most oral art forms are improvised without a fixed plot, the persona "Kahidi" in the above lullaby can be substituted with the baby's name. That is, if the baby to whom the lullaby is addressed is named Jamiu for instance, then it would be sung as "Little Jamiu" instead of "Little Kahidi". This change may slightly affect the rhythm of the first line but not the song in its entirety.

Lullaby 5:

Transcription in Yoruba Language	Translation in English Language
<i>Kilo eja ni 'm'ara fun omo mi je</i>	<i>Kilo of fish, I'll buy for my child to eat</i>
<i>Kilo eyin ni 'm'ara fun omo mi je</i>	<i>Kilo of egg, I'll buy for my child to eat</i>
<i>A se banki l'emi npa'wo si</i>	<i>So it is a bank that I'm saving to</i>
<i>Ojo ale ni emi o ko o</i>	<i>At night time, I will make my withdrawal</i>

Beyond incorporating the child into the art of poetry, the above song is used to pass sociocultural education in the society. The aforementioned lullaby can be described to fall into the category of songs that inculcate the value of responsible parenting as it urges parents to invest in their children by taking good care of them. The metaphor that the child is a bank peps parents to take care of their children if they desire a rewarding future for themselves "at night time" – which is a natural imagery that symbolizes old age.

Lullaby 6:

Transcription in Yoruba Language	Translation in English Language
<i>Alasake wajo, wajo, wajo</i>	<i>Alasake, come dance, come dance, come dance</i>
<i>Alasake wajo, omo ologe</i>	<i>Alasake, come dance, elegant child</i>
<i>Alasake, omo oba</i>	<i>Alasake, child of a King</i>
<i>Ma ma da'ran nigboro</i>	<i>Don't get into trouble in town</i>
<i>Ko ma f'se gbe 'mimi</i>	<i>So your feet wont pack irritant</i>

*Alasake wajo, wajo, wajo**Alasake, come dance, come dance, come dance**Alasake wajo, omo ologe**Alasake, come dance, elegant child*

Like the fourth lullaby, the opening name of the persona “Alasake” in this lullaby may be improvised with the name of the baby to whom the song is rendered. Introducing the child to the art of oral poetry, the repetition “wajo” provides rhythm to the hearing of the child and a child could learn to easily speak the language by picking such foot in the metrical language. The song invites the baby to a celebration and eulogizes it as a vital element in the society, “child of a King”. However, it also cautions the child against developing vices that may bring disgrace to his glorious heritage.

3. Problems Encountered During Research and Recommendation

The first challenge encountered in the beginning of the fieldwork is limited time as the researcher is engaged with coursework and attending classes. The researcher was able to surmount this challenge by hiring two agents to represent him in the field by dictating his research template to them.

The two fieldworkers encountered different challenges during the fieldwork. One was sent out of a homestead because he did not take permission from the respondent’s husband before attempting to interview the woman with his recorder. Although he eventually got another Yoruba woman who attended to his questions unhindered, it is highly recommended that a fieldworker pays homage to or seek permission from the men who serve as heads of their families before proceeding to interview their women. The other fieldworker was arrested by some government officials in Ibadan for flouting the Covid-19 safety guideline of wearing facemask on a day slated to interview the aged respondent. The fieldworker was eventually released after a long delay and was able to conduct his interview with the woman after apologizing for being late and explaining his ordeal.

4. Conclusion

This study has basically described the sociocultural functions of selected Yoruba lullabies. It shows beyond the function of lulling babies to sleep, calmness or quietness, some lullabies can be used to pass sociocultural education to posterity as children are incorporated into the art of oral poetry in the Yoruba society. The study also foregrounds its data collected, presented and analyzed by briefly defining some key concepts as Orature, oral poetry, lullaby and translation in its background. It further foregrounds the object of inquiry by briefly describing functionalism as its hermeneutical frame; the geographical cum historical description of Yoruba societies in Southwestern Nigeria. The study has also revealed the methodologies used in its collection of data and described some of the problem encountered during the fieldwork as a possible guide for prospective fieldworkers in such terrain.

Though this study is circumscribed to describing the Yoruba lullaby as a subgenre of oral poetry, it is highly recommended that the data collected and documented be preserved for posterity sake. Thus, this study recommends further researches on the exposition of Yoruba lullabies as it provides inexhaustible concrete materials to studies in Orature, Anthropology, Cultural Studies and the Humanities as a whole. Also, fieldwork data collected in their oral forms, as it is done in this study, may be transmitted through the broadcast media or through the university campus radio so that people can benefit in mass number. All in all, this study espouses the essentiality of translation of literatures for exploration and civilization.

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Aesthetic Pursuit and Cultural Metaphor of Piano Music Based on Traditional Chinese Culture

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Abstract

The cultural values of Chinese piano music are the humanistic spirit and cosmology of “the harmony between man and nature” and “the beauty of equilibrium and harmony” in traditional Chinese culture. The piano art itself has a strong Western artistic flavor. But in the context of the integration of multiple musical cultures, Chinese piano music not only embodies the essence of traditional Chinese music culture, in line with the aesthetic interests and aesthetic concepts of the Chinese nation, and contains the beauty of profound classical aesthetic connotations, placing emphasis on meaning rather than form, pursuing the mood beauty, and putting emotion in the scene. It also reflects the pursuit of traditional Chinese culture, showing the cultural metaphor of patriotic feelings, harmony in diversity, and innovative transformation in the beauty of artistic fusion. The article analyzes the aesthetic pursuit and cultural metaphor of Chinese piano art in terms of the cultural connotation of Chinese piano art.

Keywords: Chinese piano music, aesthetic pursuit, cultural metaphor

1. Introduction

During the Ming Dynasty, the Italian Catholic missionary Matteo Ricci (1552-1610), with the sacred mission of preaching, dedicated a clavichord to the then Emperor Ming Shenzong in 1601 (Xin, 1995). As an import from the West, the art of piano and traditional Chinese music come from two different cultures. Since the 20th century, Chinese piano music has gone through five stages of development (infancy, initial exploration, development, uncertainty, and prosperity), and has continued to inherit, innovate, and integrate with the understanding, respect, and recognition of Western culture. **The interoperability and integration between different cultures have** gradually strengthened, presenting the differences and characteristics between different cultures. A large number of excellent piano works have emerged: such as *The Cowherd's Flute*, *Flute and Drum at Sunset*, *The Moon Reflected on Erquan Pond*, *100 Birds Singing in Homage to the Phoenix*, *Autumn Moon Over the Calm Lake*, and so on. These works perfectly express the life and emotions of the Chinese people, reflect the wisdom of Chinese music and the charm of Chinese culture, with strong national colors and unique musical style, and also embody the essence of Chinese traditional music culture, in line with the aesthetic taste and concepts of the Chinese people.

Based on absorbing the practical experience of European piano art, Chinese piano music has created a brand new musical style with pioneering thinking and daring, which has shone in world music history and gradually formed a unique Chinese piano music culture, evolving into a wonderful cultural treasure combining Chinese and Western features. Its unique emotions, attitudes and values, vocabulary, formed its discourse system and identity, thus promoting the development of the world of piano art. (Zheng, 2021)

At present, Chinese piano music is practiced and disseminated in a global cross-cultural context. To solve the contradiction between the aesthetic ideology of art creators and art appreciators in the two cultural exchanges, it needs to go beyond the traditional subject-object mode of thinking, to understand the cultural background and social environment of piano music with inter-subjective thinking, and put it into the expression of Chinese cultural characteristics for research, so that leads to a two-way reciprocal understanding and communication across cultures. In this way, we can promote the development of piano music culture in China and meet the requirements of a diversified era.

2. Characteristics of Chinese Piano Music Cultural Value Orientation

The development process of piano art inheritance, assimilation, construction, and creation all reflect the value orientation of traditional Chinese culture.

2.1 The Cultural Spirit of “Harmony between Man and Nature”

Chinese Confucianism's “the grand music is in harmony with earth and heaven” in “heaven-human induction” and Taoism's artistic view of approaching the natural universe reflect the Chinese culture's “harmony between man and nature”. As the

dominant culture of China for thousands of years, respecting nature and adapting to nature has a rich connotation and reflects the profound and lofty cosmic spirit of the Chinese people. In essence, it reflects the humanistic spirit of traditional Chinese culture and has become a fundamental belief that has been followed throughout the long-term social practice of the Chinese people for thousands of years (Zhang, 2018).

“Harmony between man and nature” is one of the core issues in traditional Chinese philosophy, and China has been exploring the issue of man and nature for a long time, and pursuing the realm where heaven, earth, and man can be integrated. The “harmony between man and nature” is the harmony and unity of man and nature, and the harmony and unity of man and society, as well as the harmony and unity of man himself. The concept of “harmony between man and nature” is a prominent expression of the essence of traditional Chinese culture. The “gene” of traditional Chinese aesthetics contained in piano music is reflected in the pursuit of a light, still, soft, and profound tone. The themes of the works use freehand to depict the rhythm of nature and trigger moving images of “harmony between man and nature” and “the blending of scenery with emotion”. For example, Chen Peixun’s *Autumn Moon Over the Calm Lake* depicts the extreme scenery from the river, lake, sunset, xiao, drums, and waves at multiple levels, expressing the beautiful and relaxing emotions; Li Yinghai’s *Flute And Drum At Sunset* and Liu Dunnan’s piano concerto *The Mountain Forest* depict the majestic mountains and forests in the southern Miao region; He Luting’s *The Cowherd’s Flute* takes a typical Chinese ink painting of a cowherd boy riding a cow and playing the flute as its artistic image, and uses simple composition and brushwork to express the unity of heaven and man; Huang Huwei’s *Pictures of Bashu* and Cui Shiguang’s *Mountain Spring* all reflect the implication of the blending of scenes and emotion and the harmony between man and nature in Chinese piano works.

2.2 The Cultural Orientation of Equilibrium and Harmony

In the traditional Chinese aesthetic perspective, “equilibrium and harmony” is both the highest standard and the ideal realm. Confucius said, “In the application of the rites, harmony is to be prized.” In *Mencius Gong Sun Chou II*, there is “Heaven’s favorable weather is less important than earth’s advantageous terrain, and earth’s advantageous terrain is less important than human unity.” This shows that Confucianism has always promoted the way of thinking of the middle way. The idea of “valuing harmony” is often combined with the meaning of “advocating equilibrium”. In *The Doctrine (476 BC -221 BC) of the Mean*, there is “this Equilibrium is the great root from which grow all the human actions in the world, and this Harmony is the universal path which they all should pursue. Let the states of equilibrium and harmony exist in perfection, and a happy order will prevail throughout heaven and earth, and all things will be nourished and flourish”. This shows thoughts that “harmony is beautiful” and “harmony is precious”. “Harmony” is the highest state of thought and cultural pursuit of traditional Chinese culture. With the development of the times, the cultural orientation of piano music has obvious commonality and continuity. The commonality is that Chinese piano music culture has always lived in harmony with Western piano music culture, reflecting its “equilibrium and harmony” integration, “harmony in diversity” and “finding common ground while reserving differences”. While choosing the fusion of Chinese and Western music cultures, Chinese piano musicians always keep their cultural consciousness of traditional Chinese culture. Chinese piano works are the crystallization of the wisdom of “making foreign things serve China and the past serve the present” and the organic combination of Chinese national music culture and Western music culture.

With the character of “equilibrium, harmony, profundity” of traditional Chinese culture, Chinese piano works have reached a high artistic taste. For example, there are Chu Wanghua’s *Xinjiang Meditation (1978)*, Wang Jianzhong’s *Colorful Clouds Chasing the Moon (1975)*, Quan Jihao’s *Long and Short (1984)*, Chen Yi’s *Duo Ye (1984)*, Zhao Xiaosheng’s *Tai Chi (1987)*, and so on. The new era of piano music composition has changed the narrow understanding of nationalization in the past, no longer simply using the melody of folk songs with harmony and accompaniment, but recognizing the fundamental problem of nationalization in a deeper way, which is how to reflect the spirit of the nation and the spirit of the times in the works. The new era of piano music composition advocates the policy of “making the past serve the present and foreign things serve China”. It not only obtains new inspiration from foreign musical creation experiences but also conducts deeper excavation from the essence of traditional Chinese culture and national aesthetic interest. National musical aesthetic psychology and aural thinking habits are permeated with deep Chinese cultural aesthetic heritage.

3. The Aesthetic Pursuit of Chinese Piano Music

Piano music culture is a derivative of creative development, and the aesthetic pursuit based on traditional Chinese music culture presents three major characteristics: “imagery beauty”, “mood beauty” and “rhythm beauty”. The piano art brings out the connotation and artistic implication of Chinese national culture, further promoting the self-aesthetic consciousness of Chinese piano art.

3.1 “Imagery Beauty” in Chinese Piano Music

The so-called “image” is a kind of artistic imagery created by the unique emotional activity of the creative subject to express subjective feelings (Ke, 2015). The highest realm of traditional music aesthetics is “to create an imagery with an intention”, valuing the implication rather than the form. Mr. Ye Lang, a famous aesthetician in China, proposed that “In traditional Chinese aesthetics, imagery is the essence of beauty, and the image is also the essence of art. The most general provision of ‘imagery’ given by traditional Chinese aesthetics is ‘the blending of scenery with emotions’” (Ye, 2009). Specifically, it refers to the relationship between scenery and emotion, that is, the expression of emotion through the scenery and the blending of scenery with emotions. The pursuit of Chinese piano music’s imagery focuses on the expression of emotion through objects and scenes, which is rich in aesthetic ideas and presents profound aesthetic philosophies. It is mainly manifested as the intertwined relationship between content and form, reality and nihility, equilibrium and harmony, scenery and emotion, forming the aesthetic thinking of playing and appreciating Chinese piano music.

The expression of content and the choice of subject matter cannot be separated from the extremely poetic and picturesque features of mountains, water, moon, and night, and the depiction of natural landscapes link to human emotions, moods, will, and intentions to express the beauty of Chinese piano music.

The imagery of Chinese piano music works is characterized by vivid imaginative descriptions of people, landscapes, and events in traditional culture, which then form musical images. For example, composer Lai Yinghai’s adaptation of *Flute and Drum At Sunset* shows a wide range of scenes through the changes of various factors such as pitch, rhythm, sound, and strength. For example, it depicts scenes of sunset, boating on the river, flute, drum beat, river breeze, water waves, splashing waves, water birds playing, river waves, rolling waves, fishermen sculling, and so on. The work uses a variety of methods to express emotions with great precision, and the piano technique borrows from the guzheng, guqin, and pipa to completely dissolve the foreign instruments in the oriental imagery.

From the point of view of music composition, the composer’s view is objective. In the process of using notes to paint the scene, on the one hand, it is necessary to pursue the realism of the scene, and on the other hand, to imagine the scene. In the process of performance, it is necessary for the performer to understand the composer’s original intention through the analysis of the composition background and to form a psychological resonance with the composer by using the method of “empathy”, to be able to grasp the relationship between scenery and emotion more accurately, and then to achieve a precise artistic presentation through specific performance techniques.

3.2 *The Deep Sublimation of Imagery is the “Mood Beauty”*

The “mood” is an important category in the aesthetics of traditional Chinese art, and the creation and performance of Chinese-style piano suites are interwoven with the physical and emotional contexts, emotion, and mood. The creation and presentation of mood is an important factor in reflecting the style. (He, 2019) The artistic mood of “still, virtual, soft, and profound” in Chinese music culture is to integrate one’s emotional thoughts with the musical objects depicted in the creation or performance of music to achieve the state of “combination of objects and subjects”. The way of feeling of “I have you, you have me, unified chaos and unity of space and time” is a distinctive feature of traditional Chinese music thinking. It does not aim at a priori ideals and revealing the overall existence of things, but takes the process of experiencing reality and the enlightenment of ultimate existence as the purpose of artistic behavior.

In traditional Chinese culture, the literati mastered the arts of music, chess, calligraphy, and painting, and classical music enchanted countless literati with its melodious sound, easy rhythm, and idyllic scenes. And the fusion of the moods of music, chess, calligraphy and painting adds to the artistic beauty of the classical music. The piano piece *Autumn Moon over the Calm Lake* is a work that reflects this characteristic. The piece is calm and natural, with features of the Chinese nation while at the same time conforming to the traditional aesthetic characteristics of focusing on the beauty of the mood. The piano performance is vivid in image, clear in sound and transparent in texture by adjusting the touch tones, intensity and speed changes. It precisely grasps the aesthetic pursuit of Chinese culture, and depicts the artistic picture of impressive moonlight and boundless lake in the autumn, which makes the audience feel like they are immersed in the scene and the rhythm.

3.3 *The Aesthetic Pursuit of Rhythm Beauty in Chinese Piano Music*

The beauty of rhythm should combine form and spirit, which is reflected in music as the overall rhyme of musical works. Rhythm is an important category in traditional Chinese aesthetics, reflecting all the aesthetic styles of the Chinese nation. Also, it is manifested in many fields of art, such as music, painting and calligraphy. Specifically, in terms of piano music, it refers to the rhythm of musical elements, including various forms such as the blending of scenery with emotion, the combination of reality and nihility, and the oblivion of things. Just like the blank space in painting, Chinese piano works employ a large number of flexible grace notes in the use of rest in the works. It is precisely the vivid charm between reality and nihility, the static music, and the beauty of blank grace notes get that create a kind of infinite daydream of “a dramatic

moment of silence”. For example, the performance of *Flute and Drum at Sunset* by Li Yinghai, *The Moon Reflected on Erquan Pond* by Chu Wanghua, *Tai Chi* by Zhao Xiaosheng and other works gradually transition from slow and fading to resting, with a large number of grace notes to achieve the modification of the melody part, achieving the effect of complementing the sound with rhyme, which is highly romantic and shows the Chinese rhyme of piano art.

In Chinese musical works, the notation of scattered plates is often used to reflect this pursuit of rhythm. The “improvisation” and “randomness” are either in the form of a loose structure or a loose rhythm. For example, in the introduction of Wang Jianzhong’s *Colorful Clouds Chasing the Moon* (1975), the scattered board only gives a few hints about the pitch and rhythm, leaving great space for the performer to play. The specific rhythm is controlled by the performer’s inner feelings, and the music is like an ink painting scroll in a dream and a thin layer of water mist smoke. In the tune, the high notes of the right hand are like ripples, and in the hazy atmosphere created by the right-hand texture, the lines and the texture are in harmony. The melody played by the left hand is soft and refreshing. The bass reverberates far away, like a tremor of sound in the air. Thus, a kind of free expression can be obtained, and the rhyme is graceful, reflecting a kind of free aesthetic rhyme.

In addition, the musical structure and harmony style, rhythm connotation, the “transition and combination” in the musical structure, the musical harmony color, the musical elements such as traditional instrumental music, folk music, opera, folk music tone and melody, and the timbre and touch keys of the performance, give the artistic works the charm and temperament from the inside out, which gradually manifests the full vitality of the works, and conveys a vivid aesthetic sense.

The aesthetic pursuit of “imagery”, “mood” and “rhythm” in Chinese piano music is the process of brewing, accumulation, sublimation and presentation of traditional Chinese philosophy and aesthetics of Confucianism and Taoism.

4. Cultural Metaphors in Chinese Piano Art

Metaphor, as a way of cognition, is commonly found in human language and thinking. Traditional Chinese culture contains a profound spirit of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism, and is full of the composer’s understanding and interpretation of Chinese aesthetics, which has a profound cultural metaphor, reflecting the aesthetic ideals of the creator, the performer and the admirer, the feeling of the family and the reflection of the universe and nature.

4.1 Chinese Piano Music Carries the Cultural Metaphor of Family and National Sentiment

Excellent Chinese piano works can awaken in people a sense of patriotism, a desire to serve the country, the courage to take responsibility and a sense of humanity. For example, the piano concerto *The Yellow River*, with the Yellow River as its backdrop, is a passionate tribute to the unyielding spirit of struggle and the power of tenacious resistance shown by the Chinese people at a time of national crisis, and has become the voice of the times; Works including Wang Jianzhong’s *Red Flowers all over the Mountain*, *Joy of Emancipation*, and *Liu Yang River*, Chu Wang Hua’s *the Sky above the Liberated Area* and *Man Jiang Hong - Prelude (for left hand)*, and Liu Zhuang’s *Variations* based on Shandong folk song *Folk Tune of YiMeng Mountain*, speak of national righteousness and humanistic concern, making the listener feel a sense of concern for the country and its people, showing the close connection between Chinese piano art creation and the people, the times and the country, and demonstrating the spirit of Chinese piano creation, which originates from the people’s life, perpetuates the heart of the pure and builds up the spirit of rejuvenation.

4.2 Chinese Piano Culture Shows the Cultural Metaphor of Harmony in Diversity

Chinese pianists and composers are not limited to Western artistic expression but are rooted in the soil of Chinese national culture. They explore the potential of piano musical instruments, discover the new language of Chinese music in the integration of Chinese and Western culture, internalize traditional Chinese culture, and display transcendence and innovation. A series of compositional models have been developed from the interplay of Chinese and Western music cultures, creating musical works with a strong Chinese folk style. The Chinese nation has a profound cultural heritage. All ethnic groups need to achieve harmony in diversity in their exchanges, communication and integration. The world of art is gorgeous and the national culture is colorful. Transcending nationalities, regions and genres is an essential characteristic of Chinese piano music culture (Cheng D, 2021). It reflects the cultural connotation of harmony in diversity. The vitality of its inheritance and development lies not in assimilation and unity, but in accepting and absorbing the strengths of all parties. The essence of Chinese piano music culture can only be truly understood through harmony and acceptance of differences.

According to cultural anthropology, Chinese piano music, with its broad mind, has a great affinity for Western composition techniques and music culture, absorbs and transforms the Western piano music culture, and selectively embraces and accommodates the ideology and culture of different factions and nationalities, making it an organic part of the national piano culture community (Feng, 2022).

4.3 Chinese piano culture reflects the cultural metaphor of innovative transformation

Chinese traditional music culture is a profound of traditional Chinese musical culture, values and aesthetic thought. It is rooted in the fertile soil of the history and culture of various ethnic groups and epitomizes their historical culture, way of life, values and other modes of thinking and behavior. It is an inexhaustible source for music creation. The key to the innovative transformation of China's outstanding traditional cultural resources is to handle the relationship between heritage and innovation, tradition and modernity. As the saying goes, change leads to solution and solution leads to development. With a dialectical perspective, we should treat Chinese traditional music culture and foreign music culture correctly, and borrow the best elements of Western music culture based on inheriting the essence of Chinese traditional music culture. To strengthen cultural awareness and cultural identity, to inherit and explore the contemporary value of excellent Chinese traditional music culture, and to build cultural confidence, it is necessary to explore new paths of Chinese cultural development and cultural communication in the context of the new era (Adrian Tien, 2015).

The piano, as the "king of musical instruments", has a wide tonal range, and a bright, crisp, varied and expressive tone. In the first half of the 20th century, the Russian composer Alexander Tcherepnin held a competition to "solicit piano pieces with a Chinese style", which inaugurated the nationalization of piano music in China in modern times. This was an important step on the road of exploring the combination of Chinese and Western piano music in early China. As Tcherepnin says, Chinese composers must open up a path of innovative development for Chinese music...The more nationalized the works of Chinese composers are, the more they will be of world value" (Alexander & Sun, 2009).

Dai Baisheng has made a summary of the characteristics of the formation of the style of piano music composition in China. "China's nationalized piano composition has experienced the pursuit of national tones before 1949. In the 1950s, it quoted traditional tunes to create melodies with national tones. In the 1960s, it explored the nationalization of harmonies in the collection of piano adaptations of traditional music. In the 1970s, piano adaptations became the only way out of piano composition. After the 1980s, Chinese styles became more individual and diverse" (Dai, 2006).

The creative concept of uniting folk music elements with Western compositional techniques, combining Western polyphonic techniques with traditional Chinese tunings, melodies, and unique percussion rhythms, has resulted in many piano works with a fusion of Chinese and Western characteristics. It creates the piano context of Chinese style, integrates the traditional Chinese music creation techniques with the traditional Western functional harmony system, innovates in integration and develops in complementarity, which is an important way for the innovation and development of Chinese traditional music creation. It is not only an innovation in the content and form of piano music, but also a collision and interchange between Eastern aesthetic interests and Western structural styles. Chinese piano music has accumulated creative experience through the collision and interplay of Chinese and Western musical cultures, and has derived the creative mode and composition rule with Chinese style (Chen & Zhang, 2019).

The rapid development of China's economy since the reform and opening up has led to an increasingly strong demand for spiritual culture, and the "piano fever" that began in the early 1980s has led to the emergence of many outstanding piano-playing talents who have entered the international piano stage and won applause and honor for the country. This has provided an opportunity for the creative transformation and innovative development of China's excellent traditional music culture (Chen, 2015). Chinese piano music works not only embody the essence of traditional Chinese music culture, but also present it in an artistic expression that is pleasing to the people, which is in line with the aesthetic interest and aesthetic concept of the Chinese nation, and the aesthetic process of Chinese piano music can also evoke people's aesthetic imagination and rich aesthetic experience. In my view, this is a successful example of exploring the creative transformation of Chinese traditional music culture, led by the value of cultural confidence and the creation and performance of Chinese-style piano works.

Chinese piano culture profoundly embodies the contemporary and innovative characteristics of Chinese culture in the new era. In the process of the collision and fusion of the two musical cultures, Chinese piano culture has maintained its cultural self-awareness and cultural self-confidence, promoting the development of its own culture through exchanges and dialogue with the world's cultures, and making innovations on it. The piano music culture, as a highly distinctive cultural form, has been formed and developed over a long period, merging with traditional Chinese culture and forming a unique style of piano music culture. In recent years, the channels and scope of communication have gradually become various and extensive, especially the new media technology and communication channels. It can also promote the inheritance and innovation of excellent traditional music culture in an all-round, multi-field and multi-level way (Gao & Wu, 2022). Thus, it effectively promotes the overall spread and development of Chinese piano music culture, and Chinese piano music is bound to enter the world stage and stand in the forest of world music.

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The English Translation of Indeterminacies in Tao Yuanming's Poetry from the Perspective of Reception Aesthetics Theory

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Abstract

Tao Yuanming, known as "the ancestor of reclusive poets" and "the originator of pastoral poetry", occupies an important position in the history of Chinese poetry. Like many excellent poems, Tao's poems also use a large number of blank spaces, which makes his poems concise but meaningful. From the perspective of the concept of "indeterminacies" in the theory of reception aesthetics, combined with the characteristics of the blank spaces in Tao's poems, this paper classifies them into linguistic indeterminacies, syntactic indeterminacies, imagery indeterminacies, and cultural indeterminacies, analyzes and compares it with the original text and translation, and discusses the English translation methods of blank in ancient Chinese poetry.

Keywords: English translation of Tao Yuanming's poems, reception aesthetic theory, blank

1. Introduction

Poetry is a brilliant pearl in literature, and poetry translation is a bridge to convey excellent cultures from abroad. Poets express their emotions through the exquisite use of language, which is the most concise form of literature. It is a highly refined and condensed representation of real life in various ethnic language systems around the world. Poetry from different countries has its unique charm. Due to differences in geographical location, local customs, lifestyle habits, language, and other factors, Chinese and Western poetry differs greatly in terms of form, style, theme, and other aspects. Poetry translation brings vitality to literary creation in the target language country and brings novel literary experiences to readers in the target language country.

Classical poetry is a treasure of Chinese culture, and effectively conveying classical poetry is crucial for cultural exchange between China and the West. Whether readers can feel and recognize the beauty of poetry translations is the key to poetry aesthetic translation. Only when the beauty of the source language poetry appears in a form that the target reader can accept and identify with, can it stimulate the reader's subjective initiative in reading and enable them to experience aesthetic effects similar to those of the original text. Liu Bai (vacancies) is a major feature of Chinese poetry and a major difficulty in translating Chinese poetry. It shares similarities with the "indeterminacy" in reception aesthetics. This paper takes Tao Yuanming's poetry as the corpus, and based on the theory of reception aesthetics, analyzes and compares the translation of Liu Bai (vacancies) in Chinese classical poetry from four aspects: linguistic indeterminacy, syntactic indeterminacy, image indeterminacy, and cultural indeterminacy.

2. "Indeterminacy" in the Theory of Reception Aesthetics

The theory of reception aesthetics, which originated in the 1960s, has changed the vision of literary research from author-centered and work-centered to reader-centered through the investigation and reflection of previous literary theories, thus improving the status of readers and enriching the connotation of literary works. Robert Jauss, one of the founders of reception aesthetics and a famous German literary theorist, published the article "The History of Literature as a Challenge to the Science of Literature" in 1967, marking the birth of reception aesthetics, whose theoretical basis is phenomenal aesthetics and interpretive aesthetics. Wolfgang Iser is another important representative of reception aesthetics. Robert Jauss and Wolfgang Iser together are known as the "two stars of reception aesthetics".

According to reception aesthetics, literary texts are not a close whole but tend to provide "schematized aspects" (Iser, 1978:21). In other words, there are many implications or meaning gaps in literary texts, which are not clearly expressed in words and should be discovered and filled by readers. This is why, according to the view of reception aesthetics, literary works are not equal to literary texts, while other theories regard these two concepts as the same. Literary works are full of uncertain factors or gaps. What readers need to do when reading is to fill these gaps with their vision of expectation, which is called concretization in reception aesthetics. In a narrow sense, concretization refers to any actions and efforts taken by readers to fill in every uncertain factor. In a broad sense, it refers to the actualization of the text. In other words, a literary work includes not only the literary text, but also the concretization of readers, and the latter part is more important.

"Indeterminacy" is an essential part of literary works. Iser (1979, p. 125) claimed that meaning is not embodied in the text, but generated in the process of reading. They are not entirely subjective or pure texts, but the result of interaction between

readers and texts. Therefore, the translator, as a reader, fills in these indeterminacies by making full use of proper imagination and creativity. Then, the target readers complete the uncertainties in the translated works through their imagination and creativity. Iser (1979, p. 55) said that the more uncertain factors are, the more diverse the image the reader constructs.

Reception aesthetics was applied to Western translation studies in the late 1970s. In the 1980s, some Chinese scholars also began to apply reception aesthetics in translation study. Reception aesthetics is successful and effective in guiding and studying translation, and provides new perspectives and ideas for translation and translation studies.

3. Liu Bai in Ancient Chinese Poems

Ancient Chinese poetry is the quintessence of Chinese culture. Most of its length is limited, but its meaning is often endless. Today, despite the changes of times, it still has unattainable and unrepeatable artistic and cultural values, of which "Liu Bai" is one of its major characteristics. "As the internal essence of Chinese poetry culture, the vacancies and indeterminacies of meaning in ancient art have some holographic characteristics of Chinese cultural spirit. It is also the core topic of the aesthetic hermeneutics of ancient Chinese literature, and is the generation and operation mechanism of Chinese artistic meaning in the form of artistic conception." (Jin, 1995). Liu Bai, that is, leaving corresponding blank spaces in the work. What is left behind is a kind of wisdom, a realm, the end of visualization, the beginning of imagery. Leaving vacancies can be seen as the process of writing realistically and seeking virtuality. The language of poetry is highly concise, leaping, and implicit. A good poem can often show a grand scene or reach a lofty artistic conception through a few words of description, and achieve the artistic height of endless meaning. Yan Yu once said in *The Ts'ang Lang Poetry Critique* (沧浪诗话): "...Therefore, its beauty is thorough and exquisite, and it cannot be touched. It is like the sound in the air, the color in the picture, the moon in the water, and the image in the mirror. The words are limited but the meaning is endless.", indicating the beauty of blank space in poetry and prose.

The meaning of vacancies is also mentioned in reception aesthetics. It shares similarities with the "indeterminacy" in reception aesthetics. Iser (1974) said: "If the reader has been given the whole story, leaving with nothing to do, then his imagination will never enter the field, and the result will be that everything is readily set out in front of the reader, and then inevitably boredom will set in." Liu Bai in ancient poetry is ubiquitous, and the forms it takes are diverse. At the micro level, it includes rhythm, linguistic words, syntactic structure, and rhetorical devices; at the macro level, it includes imagery and connotation.

4. English Translation of Indeterminacies in the Poems of Tao Yuanming

Tao Yuanming (c. 365-427) was a distinguished poet, rhetorician, and essayist from the late Eastern Jin Dynasty to the early Liu Song Dynasty. He is known as "the patriarch of the hermit poets" and "the progenitor of the idyllic poetry school". Tao wrote 125 poems and 12 essays, which were compiled by later generations as the *Tao Yuanming Collection*.

The main types of his works are: drinking poems, chanting poems, pastoral poems, and prose. Tao is the first poet who wrote a lot about drinking in the history of Chinese literature. His drinking poems are rich in life, profound in philosophical connotation, and highly accomplished in art, which are masterpieces in the history of Chinese poetry. Tao's spirit of drinking had a great impact on the creation of drinking poetry in the Tang and Song dynasties. As a huge spiritual force, he inspired scholars and literati in the depths of adversity, and his life of poetry and drinking has become an ideal life mode for many poets. Tao's drinking spirit has been inherited through the creation of poets of all ages and has given out eternal artistic brilliance in the history of literature. In addition, his idyllic poems are the most numerous and the most accomplished. These poems fully express the poet's noble moral integrity of keeping his will; his love for simple rural life, his knowledge of labor and his friendly feelings toward the working people; and his pursuit and aspiration for an ideal world. As a literati doctor, such thoughts, feelings, and contents are unprecedented in the history of literature, especially in a society with strict patriarchal systems and concepts. Tao is the pioneer of pastoral poetry. His pastoral poems, with simple and natural language and lofty artistic conception, opened up an unexplored land for Chinese poetry and directly affected the pastoral poetry school of the Tang Dynasty. In his idyllic poems, his weariness of the dark reality and his love for the quiet idyllic life can be seen everywhere.

Tao's works have attracted the attention of not only Chinese scholars and readers but also countless poets, literary enthusiasts, and researchers from abroad. Not only has scholarship on Tao and his works been noted in the history of Chinese literature, but overseas interest and research on him have continued for many centuries, with a wealth of related writings. Overseas readers, especially in the English-speaking world, became acquainted with Tao mainly through the English translations of his works. Modern readers in the English-speaking world have come to know the poet and his life through the translations of poems by Sinologists or translators from different periods.

Like many traditional Chinese poems, Tao's poems also use a large number of vacancies. According to the characteristics of the blank spaces in his poems, this paper divides it into four parts: linguistic indeterminacies, syntactic indeterminacies,

imagery indeterminacies, and cultural indeterminacies. It analyzes and compares the indeterminacies in the original text and the translated text, and discusses the English translation methods of the blank space in ancient poems in different categories.

4.1 Linguistic indeterminacies

At the linguistic level, indeterminacies refer to the omission of some words that lead to incomplete sentences, including subjects, predicates, prepositions, modifiers, and conjunctions. These ellipsis will contribute to the conciseness and retention of poetry, and also help to form the imagination space in the reader's mind. Chinese classical poetry is a literary genre that is full of blanks and fuzziness in all directions and at all levels, leaving a huge space for readers to appreciate. Rhetoric is the main form of text blank, that is, linguistic indeterminacies are formed through pun, metaphor, implication, metonymy, irony, repetition, etc. The following examples are linguistic indeterminacies caused by reduplicated words.

Reduplicated words are an aesthetic feature of Tao's poems. In many of Tao's poems, verbs appear as reduplicated words. Dealing with the reduplication is an important part of preserving the language style and reproducing the poetic meaning of Tao's poems, but due to the differences between the Chinese and Western languages, it is not advisable to translate the reduplication directly into English, as it will not only create an obstacle to the understanding of the target language readers but will also make the grammatical structure of the translation confused. Therefore, for this kind of semantic gap, the translator needs to give full play to his initiative and creativity and make appropriate rewriting to help the readers of the target language understand the content and meaning of the poem without compromising the original meaning.

Example 1

Source Text: 靡靡秋已夕，凄凄风露交。

—《己酉岁九月九日》

Target text:

Late autumn now provides a dreary view,
Amid the chilly wind and heavy dew.

—Tr. by Wang Rongpei (2003:66)

Slowly the autumn has come to its close;
Chilly the wind and dew mingle.

—Tr. by Albert Richard Davis (1984:78)

Little by little autumn has come to an end
Chill, chill the wind and dew combine.

—Tr. by James Robert Hightower (1970:119)

The poem is about the arrival of the bleak wind and dew in the late autumn of September. The use of the words '靡靡' and '凄凄' seem to convey the special atmosphere of late autumn. The superlatives here act as adjectives in the original text to modify autumn and wind respectively, but Wang translates them as the adjectives 'late', 'dreary' and 'chilly' and 'heavy', which form a couplet, conveying the original meaning and fills in the missing first rhyme with the final rhyme. The only minor flaw is that the phonetic beauty of reduplicated words is not conveyed to readers. Davis converted these two reduplicated words into adverbs, which is a great translation method because reduplicated words mostly have a modifying effect in poetry and prose. While filling in the meaning gap, Davis made the translated text very close to the original text, providing readers with a similar aesthetic experience and meeting their expectations.

Example 2

Source Text: 遥遥万里辉，荡荡空中景。

—《杂诗八首》（其二）

Target text:

The moon sheds light o'er ten thousand li.

Visible its glow o'er land and sea.

—Tr. by Wang Rongpei (2003:90)

Far, far the rays extend a million miles,

Wide, wide the lights spread out through space.

—Tr. by James Robert Hightower (1970:196)

Tao Yuanming's poetry often reveals a profound experience of life. This experience is a profound introspection of life itself. For human life, its meaning is evergreen. In the second poem of the *Miscellaneous Poems*, Tao Yuanming writes of his sense of worry that time is running out and that his life is already limited, that he has not yet achieved his ambition, and that the value of his life has not yet been realized. The poem depicts the scene between heaven and earth at sunset and moonrise, which then leads to the poet's feeling that life is short and that it is difficult to achieve one's ambition. Wang's translation uses

'o'er' to convey the implication of the two superlatives '遥遥' and '荡荡', which is simple and concise. Although it does not reproduce the style of the superlative at the beginning of the stanza, the two lines echo each other in form, and the end rhyme largely fills in the gaps in the superlative.

Example 3

Source Text: 眇眇孤舟逝，绵绵归思纡。

—《始作镇军参军经曲阿作》

Target text:

The farther from home in my boat I go,
The stronger my thoughts for the country grow.

—Tr. by Wang Rongpei (2003:46)

Far into the distance the lonely boat departed,
Continuous and constant the thought of returning home.

—Tr. by William Acker (1952:87)

Into the distance the solitary boat goes;
Endlessly my thoughts of returning wind.

—Tr. by Albert Richard Davis (1984:120)

Wang uses the basic pattern of the common sentence pattern "the more, the more" in the English language to replace Tao Yuanming's technique of reduplication. This translation method retains the rhetorical features and aesthetic taste of the original poem to a large extent and also conforms to the expectations of the target language readers. It is a "win-win" translation method, and it is the re-creation and filling of the language gap. In comparison, although William Acker's translation conveys the meaning of the original poem, it is still lacking in rhyme and sound. However, it can be seen that he has taken some consideration in this regard, such as translating "绵绵" as "continuous and constant", which is a common alliteration in English poetry rhetoric. It is obvious that both translators have their ways of thinking and translating, and I reckon that Wang's version is more in line with readers' expectations.

4.2 Syntactic indeterminacies

Syntactic indeterminacies are produced by the breakthrough or backwash of poetic language to the rules and collocations of everyday language. It can create an undetermined state through the absence of sentence elements (lack of subject, predicate, and object), produce a compound sense or ambiguity effect through word usage, or change the meaning gap through abnormal collocation (such as preposition of object, inversion of subject and predicate, etc.).

Example 4

Source Text: 结庐在人境，而无车马喧。

问君何能尔，心远地自偏。

—《饮酒二十首》（其五）

Target text:

My house is built amid the world of men,
Yet with no sound and fury do I ken.

To tell you how I can keep deaf and blind,
Any place is calm for a peaceful mind.

—Tr. by Wang Rongpei (2003:113)

I built my house near where others dwell,
And yet there is no clamor of carriages and horses.

You ask of me "How can this be so?"

"When the heart is far the place of itself is distant."

—Tr. by William Acker (1952:117)

I built my hut beside a traveled road
Yet hear no noise of passing carts and horses.

You would like to know how it is done?

With the mind detached, one's place becomes remote.

—Tr. by James Robert Hightower (1970:130)

Tao pioneered drinking poetry, and his drinking poem is a masterpiece in the history of Chinese poetry, with its rich life content, profound philosophical connotations, and high artistic achievement. This poem lacks a subject in sentence structure, which is very common in classical Chinese poetry. The charm of ancient Chinese lies in its flexible structure and scattered

sentence patterns. The poet uses subject-free sentences with verbs as the core to describe the scenery and create vivid images. However, English is a hypotactic language and its structure is rigorous. Therefore, to ensure the accuracy of grammar, the translator needs to fill in the missing content in Chinese according to English grammar rules. Here, all three translators add the subject "I" and translate the ownership of "庐" (the place where the poet lived), thus the meaning of the original poem is truly conveyed. In the process of translating poetry into English, the completion of the syntactic structure of the original poem coordinates the pragmatic differences between Chinese and Western poetry and clears cognitive barriers for readers.

Example 5

Source Text: 少无适俗韵，性本爱丘山。

误入尘网中，一去三十年。

—《归园田居》

Target text:

I've loathed the madding crowd since I was a boy

While hills and mountains have filled me with joy.

By mistake I sought mundane careers

And got entrapped in them for thirty years.

—Tr. by Wang Rongpei (2003:52)

Nothing like the others, even as a child,

rooted in a love for hills and mountains,

I fell into their net of dust, that one

departure a blunder lasting thirteen years.

—Tr. by David Hinton (1993:43)

In this poem, as in the previous one, the subject is not mentioned, and the two translations add the subject 'I' to the original poem. In such cases, the translator needs to analyze and fill in the omitted syntactic elements and words according to the characteristics of the source and target languages.

4.3 Imagery indeterminacies

“意象” is a unique and typical concept in Chinese classical poetry, which involves an artistic image and its implication. The concept of it in Chinese poetry is different from that of "image" in English, because "image" does not have as many meanings as “意象”. When writing poems, the poet will choose some specific images to describe the picture and convey his feelings. “意象” is the external object that the poet chooses and endows with internal emotions and feelings. It is the combination of exterior and interior with aesthetic value. Therefore, the reader must grasp these images to understand and appreciate the poet's feelings and emotions.

Example 6

Source Text: 相见无杂言，但道桑麻长。

—《归园田居五首》（其二）

Target text:

When we meet, a few remarks will go;

How fast the hemp and mulberry leaves grow!

—Tr. by Wang Rongpei (2003:54)

On overgrown paths, I meet neighbors

Without confusion: we only talk about

how the crops are doing, nothing more.

—Tr. by David Hinton (1993:45)

This poem was written the second year after Tao resigned. He was immersed in farming life at that time and often communicated with his neighbors about the growth of crops. From the pictures of "no miscellaneous words" and "mulberry hemp", we can understand how Tao's social life is. Wang translated "桑麻" literally as "hemp and mulberry", but Hinton did not translate it literally as "hemp and mulberry", but changed it to "crops". Due to the different geographical environments in China and the West, the cultivated food crops are also different, so Western readers may not know much about mulberry and hemp, but Wang's translation can expand the horizon of expectations of Western readers to some extent, stimulate their thinking, and generate interest in customs and habits beyond poetry. Hinton's translation is also justifiable, which is more conducive to readers' understanding of poetry, but it may also be detrimental to the reader's initiative and leave little room for reflection.

Example 7

Source Text: 荣荣窗下兰，密密堂前柳。

初与君别时，不谓行当久。

—《拟古》（其一）

Target text:

The orchids blossom lush beneath the windows;

Before my parlor grow so dense the willows.

When you departed from me, my dear friend,

I did not know how many years you'd spend.

—Tr. by Wang Rongpei (2003,152)

Below my window orchids show their colors,

Before the hall the willow tree is dense.

When first my friend and I were separated

I had not thought he would be long away.

—Tr. by James Robert Hightower (1970:169)

Willow (柳) in Chinese is pronounced similarly to the character stay (留), meaning to stay or to wish for someone to stay. This special pronunciation gives Willow's image the feeling of missing someone or the sadness of departure. Willow is usually the carrier of the poet's emotion. It is therefore often used by poets to express their homesickness in the face of parting. The same is true of Tao's poems. The willows in his poems also have profound meanings. The literal translation method adopted by Wang here does not explain the connotation of the willow tree much, but the whole poem is composed of two sentences of scenery and the last two sentences of lyricism. The target language readers may not understand the deep meaning behind the "willow" at the beginning, but this is also the beauty of the translation. As the readers further understand and take the initiative, it is not difficult to establish the relationship between the image words and emotions, and then explore the connotation behind it. In this case, the expectations of target language readers are expanded and cultural exchanges are highly realized. Therefore, by adopting this translation method, the original image is retained to the maximum extent, and its aesthetic value is well preserved in the target text. Hightower's translation also retains the two imagery words in the poem, and he noticed the rhythmic beauty of the two reduplicated words in the poem. Therefore, he used the alliterations of "below" and "before" in his translation, conveying both the imagery beauty and the phonological beauty of the original text.

Example 8

Source Text: 芳菊开林耀，青松冠岩列。

怀此贞秀姿，卓为霜下杰。

—《和郭主簿》（其二）

Target text:

In verdant woods, chrysanthemum now glows;

On rocky slopes, green pine-trees line in rows.

Lofty are chrysanthemums and pines,

Which in the frosty weather show best signs.

—Tr. by Wang Rongpei (2003:20)

Fragrant chrysanthemums ablaze in woodlands

blooming, green pines lining the clifftops:

Isn't this the immaculate heart beauty,

this frost-deepened austerity?

---Tr. by David Hinton (1993:50)

Chrysanthemums (芳菊) and pine trees (青松) are cultural symbols with special meanings in Chinese culture. In the late autumn when everything is withering, the fragrant chrysanthemum and the green pine are unafraid of the cold, unyielding, blooming proudly and standing firmly, symbolizing noble and tenacious character and integrity. Here, although the poet describes scenery, he uses things to describe people, to express his feelings of staying away from the dark officialdom and sticking to the noble and upright spirit. Even though foreign readers are familiar with chrysanthemums and pine, they may not know the connotation of these two images in traditional Chinese culture. Wang chooses to retain the surface image and modifies it with "lofty" in the following so that the reader can find the deep meaning. Readers could acknowledge that chrysanthemums and pine trees may not only represent plants and flowers in the poem. Likewise, David also reflects this in his translation, as "immaculate heart beauty" and "austerity" are both words used to describe human beings, and readers will realize that in Chinese traditional poetry and prose, chrysanthemums and pines are imbued with human emotions and are symbols of purity and nobility. Proper filling by the translator can stimulate the target readers to explore the deep meaning

behind the representation, thus broadening their horizon of expectations.

4.4 Cultural indeterminacies

To understand the connotation and artistic conception of Chinese poetry, one must have a comprehensive understanding of the Chinese cultural background it involves, because language and culture are closely related to each other. "There exists no language that is not steeped in the context of culture, no culture that does not have at its center in the structure of natural language." (Lotman, 1978: 211-212). The image of Chinese poetry is rooted in Chinese culture, influenced and shaped by it. The special connotation of some images in Chinese culture is determined by the uniqueness of Chinese culture. Peter Newmark once said, "Frequently where is the cultural focus, there is a translation problem due to the cultural 'gap' or 'distance' between the source and target languages." (Newmark, 2001: 94). Even the same thing will have different connotations in different cultures.

Example 9

Source Text: 路边两高坟，伯牙与庄周。

此士难再得，吾行欲何求？

—《拟古》（其八）

Target text:

Gone is Bo-ya, who played the zither for his friend;

Gone is Zhuangzi, who talked truth with his friend.

Since there's no man with such a noble mind.

Where should I roam and what am I to find!

—Tr. by Wang Rongpei (2003:160)

Two high graves by the side of the road,

Po Ya in one, the other Chuang Chou.

Men like these are hard to find

If I went now, what would I seek?

---Tr. by James Robert Hightower (1970:182)

"Bo-ya" (伯牙) and "Zhuangzi" (庄周) are household names in Chinese culture, but they may not be well known to Western readers. The cultural gap will hinder the target language readers' accurate understanding of the original text. Both Bo-ya and Zhuangzi are pursuing a life of unbridled friendship with their best friends, and seldom consider their political careers. Tao Yuanming resonates with them in this regard. In consideration of the acceptance of the target language readers, Wang explained the two names after the literal translation to clarify the implied content and the theme. Therefore, readers of the target language can not only obtain its original meaning but also acquire knowledge about culture-specific words. In this way, the expectation range of target language readers is expanded. James directly translates the names of the people in the poem without explaining them. Instead, he provided annotations in the subsequent appreciation of the poem. Although readers may understand what these two people represent when reading the explanation, they do not seek a thorough understanding when reading the poem. In my humble perspective, a better way to deal with such situations is to provide a slight explanation in the original poem, which can be referred to in Wang's translation. This not only helps readers understand but also does not interrupt them in reading.

Example 10

Source Text: 秋菊有佳色，浥露掇其英。

泛此忘忧物，远我遗世情。

—《饮酒》（其七）

Target text:

With fair chrysanthemums in view,

I pluck their petals glistening with wet dew.

A sip of wine that carries these fair flowers,

Will free my mind from all the worldly powers.

—Tr. by Wang Rongpei (2003:112)

Colors infusing autumn chrysanthemums

exquisite, I pick dew-bathed petals,

Float them on that forget-your-cares stuff.

Even my passion for living apart

soon grows distant.

—Tr. by David Hinton (1993:100)

"忘忧物" is the synonym for Jiu (alcohol) in ancient times, because drinking can make people temporarily forget the worries of reality. In many stories in China, Jiu appears as the image of "Wang You Wu". Like China, western countries also have their own unique wine culture, but in the West, wine is mostly associated with romance and elegance, and is rarely used to express and relieve sadness, which forms a gap in the understanding of Chinese and Western wine culture. Wang's translation of "Wang You Wu" into "a sip of wine" does not translate its literal meaning directly, thus avoiding ambiguity. In addition, the translation of "jiu" (酒) into "wine" conforms to the expectations of Western readers and helps Western readers understand the original text. Hinton translates it as "forget-your cares stuff", Although this approach is faithful to the original text, readers may not be able to understand the translation due to cultural differences between China and the West. In this case, translators need to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of the literal translation. If the literal translation can be both faithful to the original text and understandable to readers, then it is acceptable to use. But if literal translation adds comprehension barriers to readers, it may require a change in translation methods.

Example 11

Source Text: 彭祖爱永年，欲留不得住。

—《形影神三首》（神释）

Target text:

In endless pursuit for eternal life,

Peng Zu died and gave up worldly strife.

—Tr. by Wang Rongpei (2003:80)

P'eng lived to a great age,

Yet he went at last, when he longed to stay.

(P'eng is the Chinese Methuselah.)

—Tr. by Arthur Waley

"Peng Zu", one of the pioneers of Taoism in the pre-Qin Dynasty, is said to have lived 800 years. In Chinese traditional culture, he is a long-lived person. In Western culture, according to the Hebrew Bible, Methuselah was the ancestor of Enoch and lived until 969. Wang and Waley both translated "Peng Zu" directly. The difference is that Waley added the note "P'eng is the Chinese Methuselah." He not only retained the cultural image in the original text, but also linked it with the cultural image familiar to western readers, which is helpful for western readers to understand the original text. This way of using cultural relevance and similarity to eliminate barriers to understanding not only helps Western readers understand the original text but also helps expand their horizons of expectation and learn more about Chinese culture.

5. Conclusion

Tao Yuanming is an important poet in the history of Chinese poetry. His poems and personality enjoy a high reputation in the literary circles at home and abroad. The language in his poems is plain but far-reaching and thought-provoking, revealing the righteousness of life between the lines. The indeterminacies in his poems are the embodiment of his unique aesthetics, which contains profound cultural connotation. For Western readers, if they want to truly understand the connotation, the necessary Chinese cultural cultivation is indispensable. However, due to the differences in cultural background, living habits, geographical environment, etc., Western readers will inevitably feel difficulty in the process of understanding. If the connotation of the images cannot be understood, the artistic conception of the poem and the thoughts and feelings expressed by the poet will be more difficult to predict, and the aesthetic experience will also be greatly diminished.

The theory of reception aesthetics provides a new perspective for the translation community to study and deal with the blank points in poetry from the readers' point of view. Its "indeterminacy" theory is similar to the "Liu Bai" technique with a long history in China. From the above analysis of the translated versions of Tao's poems, we can see that in the principle of "for readers", the translators, according to the characteristics of the source language and the target language and cultural differences, fill and interpret the vacancies in the poem through different translation strategies, clarifying the understanding obstacles for the target language readers. At the same time, the translator does not interpret the original poem too much, but leaves the readers with space for imagination, providing a reference for the English translation of poetry. "Therefore, there is no literal translation or free translation in poetry translation, but only plain and skillful translation." (Lyu, 2002) The translator is the reader first, and then the translator.

Through the comparative analysis of the above translations, it can be seen that different translators have different translation styles and personal innovation abilities. Finally, this paper provides the following suggestions for filling blank spaces in Chinese poetry with the excellent translations mentioned above: 1. When handling linguistic indeterminacies, appropriate word conversions can be made according to the meaning and composition of the words in the original context, especially when translating distinctive vocabulary such as reduplicated words. It is also important to pay attention to whether the translation can convey the phonological beauty of the original text. The Simple literal translation is not advisable on such occasions, and the specific translation method still needs to be carefully considered by translators. 2. When dealing with

syntactic indeterminacies, the translator should be aware of the differences in syntactic structure between Chinese and English, as incomplete sentence components are quite common in classical Chinese poetry. The translator should make an appropriate filling to facilitate the understanding of the target language readers. 3. When translating images in poetry and prose, translators need to adjust their translation strategies according to the context. If the context of the original text can reflect the connection between images and their symbolic meanings, then the treatment is simple and a direct translation can be adopted, which not only conveys the meaning but also leaves room for the readers to think. But if the connection is not reflected in the poetry, then the translator might add appropriate explanations or annotations. Here, the author leans more toward the former, which also tests the translator's ability to adapt and create. If annotations are added in the following text, it is highly likely to interrupt the reader and affect the aesthetic experience. 4. When translating culturally loaded words, translators can also refer to the translation method mentioned in the last suggestion. There are both differences and similarities between Chinese and English cultures. When dealing with heterogeneous cultures, translators can adopt the interpretive translation method. When dealing with common cultures, translators can use cultural commonalities to interpret the content of poetry and prose by borrowing the corresponding content in the target culture. This not only helps translators understand the content of poetry and prose but also enhances the communication and integration between the two cultures.

Thus, in the process of poetry translation, translators should unleash their imagination and creativity, try their best to clear the reading barriers caused by uncontrollable factors such as cultural background, and at the same time, appropriately preserve the blank features in the original poem, giving target language readers a certain amount of imaginative range, achieving interaction and communication between readers and poetry, and enabling readers to better appreciate the beauty of poetry.

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A Corpus-based Contrastive Analysis of Sino-U.S. National Defense White Papers: Images, Problems and Strategies

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Abstract

The English translations of China's national defense white papers play crucial roles in conveying China's defense and military policies to the international community. Their accuracy and authenticity directly impact foreign readers' understanding of China's defense policies and shape their perception of China. However, previous English translations have been problematic, with lengthy and difficult-to-read texts, excessive and complex nouns, and a writing style that does not conform to English conventions. This paper explores the specific translation problems, analyzes the underlying causes, and proposes feasible translation strategies. Using *China's National Defense in the New Era (CNDNE)* and *2022 U.S. National Defense Strategy (2022 NDS)* as sample texts, we established corpora of the national defense white papers for the two nations. With the assistance of Weiciyun and AntConc, we conducted a contrastive analysis between the original Chinese discourse and its English translation, as well as between the Chinese and American defense white papers. The analysis focused on high-frequency words and subjects to explore the images of the two countries constructed by each national defense white paper. Furthermore, this study compared the features of CNDNE and 2022 NDS using AntConc and established a parallel corpus of CNDNE by aligning sentence pairs through Tmxmall. We then utilized CUC_Paraconc to analyze the words and sentence structures in the Chinese and English versions of CNDNE, identifying translation problems in the translation and providing strategies. The findings provide insights, directions, and methods for the writing, translation and post-editing of China's defense white paper and open new avenues for further research.

Keywords: national defense white paper, corpus translation studies, contrastive analysis, translation problems and strategies

1. Introduction

National defense is essential for the peace and development of a country. Many countries release national defense white papers to maintain domestic stability, showcase their defense capabilities and strategies to the international community, and convey their intentions for international security cooperation. In recent years, China's comprehensive national strength and military power have attracted the attention of foreign governments regarding China's defense policies. Therefore, the significance of China's national defense white papers and their translations for foreign governments and the public to understand China's defense situation and policies is self-evident. However, the English translations of defense white papers suffer from various problems, such as lengthy sentences, numerous and difficult-to-understand nouns, and a writing style that does not conform to English conventions. These problems often discourage English readers from completing the entire defense white paper, or if they do, they may struggle to grasp certain concepts or even misunderstand them, leading to unfavorable impressions of China. This study aims to explore and summarize the specific causes of these issues and proposes targeted translation strategies, offering inspirations to improve the translations of China's defense white papers. It also provides insights and methods for scholars engaging in future research on national defense white papers.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Research on White Paper

White Paper is an official document issued by a government or organization that aims to explain specific issues, policies, or provide relevant information and recommendations. Typically, it involves comprehensive analysis and explanation of a particular topic, to provide readers with an in-depth understanding of the specific issue and offer policy advice or action plans. The Chinese white papers are compiled and released by the Information Office of the State Council, with the translation into multiple languages by the Foreign Language Press, a subsidiary of the Foreign Language Bureau (Li, 2020). However, there is a limited body of literature focused on the translation of Chinese white papers, and the existing literature predominantly concentrates on the words in English translations of Chinese white papers (with the exception of Yang, 2018; Kim, 2019) and those of different countries (e.g., Dou, 2012; Bertazzo, 2012; Lee, 2013; Seo, 2019; Donadelli, 2021).

As one type of White Paper, the National Defense White Paper is published by the defense department or military institutions, intending to elaborate on a country's defense policy, military strategy, and the development planning of military forces. It

usually encompasses aspects such as the assessment of national security threats, formulation of military strategies, and the organization, equipment, and development of military forces. Its purpose is to communicate a nation's defense policy and military intentions to domestic and international audiences, including the general public, military peers, and the international community. China's defense white papers include various types of white papers related to defense released by the State Council Information Office, such as cybersecurity, space, the Taiwan question, nuclear security, and Asia-Pacific security cooperation. The focus of this study is on the white papers published on the official English website of the Ministry of National Defense, as they are the most easily accessible and significant materials about national defense for foreign audiences. Since 2010, the Ministry of National Defense has published four defense white papers: *China's National Defense in 2010*, *The Diversified Employment of China's Armed Forces (2013)*, *China's Military Strategy (2015)* and the latest *China's National Defense in the New Era (2019)*.

Since the 1990s, the broad categorization of U.S. defense white papers includes four main types: *the National Security Strategy* (by the White House), the *National Defense Strategy* (by the U.S. Department of Defense), the *Report of the Quadrennial Defense Review* (by the U.S. Department of Defense), and the *National Military Strategy* (by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff). The publication of these white papers provides information about U.S. defense to the American public and U.S. allies, playing a role in maintaining public support and fostering cooperation among allied nations and having its wording features (Yu, 2016).

This study selected *China's National Defense in the New Era* (《新时代的中国国防》, CNDNE) and the *2022 National Defense Strategy (2022 NDS)*, released on July 24, 2019 and October 27, 2022, respectively. This ensures comparability between the white papers of these two nations as both of them were released by the National Defense authorities.

2.2 Translations of China's National Defense White Papers

To effectively convey China's national defense policies and enhance its international discourse rights, the translations of the national defense white papers should strive for accurate word selection that aligns with the knowledge and cultural background of the target audience. Furthermore, the General Office of the Communist Party of China issued a notice on solving prominent problems of formalism and reducing the burden on the comrades (《关于解决形式主义突出问题为基层减负的通知》), calling for the promotion of a concise, practical, and innovative writing style, and resolutely reducing the length of documents to prevent verbosity. However, the English translations of China's national defense white papers are troubled with numerous problems (see Huang, 2004; Zheng, 2014; Ji & Xu, 2016; Wang, 2019; Tan & Lu, 2022) and fail to overcome the formalism problems. Existing research has come up with some principles for translation (Yang, 2014; Wu & Ye, 2015). They do not directly address the specific challenges faced in the translation of national defense white papers. Further research and collaboration between the white paper editors, translation teams, and experts in translation studies may be necessary to develop effective strategies for enhancing the translation quality and effectiveness of these important documents.

2.3 Corpus Research

Corpus research includes the construction of large-scale and multilingual corpora, and specialized corpora, as well as the use of monolingual or bilingual corpora to study vocabulary usage features, translator style, translation strategies, translation criticism, and translation and multimodality. Wang (2008) found, based on corpus research, that translated Chinese exhibits features such as lower degree of lexical variation, lower lexical density, explicitation of function words, explicitation of referential expressions, and increased frequency of common words compared to original Chinese. Xu (2016) suggested that translated English shows characteristics of explicitation in cohesion and repetition of content words between sentences compared to original English. Hu (2017) proposed that it is possible to describe translator style based on statistical analyses of relevant translation facts and analyze the reasons or constraining factors for the formation of translator style from both translator-specific and non-translator-specific factors. Wang (2015) pointed out that the research findings of parallel corpora, such as part-of-speech distribution, sentence length, and structural capacity, can be directly applied to the teaching process to enhance translation learning efficiency and effectiveness. Li (2021) developed a multilingual parallel corpus of "Xi Jinping: The Governance of China" and indicated its application value in the construction of multilingual parallel corpora, extraction of multilingual terminology, translation teaching, and machine translation. Current corpus research in China primarily focuses on vocabulary, with limited involvement at the syntactic level and scarce attention to discourse. Furthermore, most of the current corpus translation research revolves around corpus construction, literary translation studies, and overviews of corpus research, with fewer studies on the translation of political texts, and even rarer research specifically on the defense white paper.

With the aid of corpus tools, scholars in the international translation community have conducted various studies, such as the creation of large corpora, corpus comparisons, and analysis of high-frequency words, to investigate text features, translation

problems, and translation strategies. Corpus research in the translation industry is applied in various fields, including translation training, translation education, translation work, and the development of corpus technologies. Baker conducted translator-style research based on corpora, and the analysis process typically does not consider the corresponding source texts. However, this study focuses on the investigation of translation style, so the characteristics of the source text are taken into consideration in the research. Christodouloupoulos and Steedman (2015) created a massively parallel corpus based on 100 translations of the Bible and described the potential of the Bible as a corpus for natural language processing. Frankenberg-Garcia (2021) found that keyword analysis not only reiterates known problems of discourse in machine translation such as lexical inconsistency and pronoun resolution but can also provide valuable insights regarding contextual aspects of translated discourse. Giampieri (2020) held that corpora allow one to grasp word use in contexts, find collocations or fixed expressions and deliver more fine-grained translation works.

Although the use of corpus technology in the field of translation has many benefits, some papers point out the drawbacks of excessive reliance on corpus technology. Cho (2012) believed that after obtaining information by these tools, researchers have to return to the context. Giampieri (2020) believed that when we use corpora to help us translate, we may feel overwhelmed by Internet data and “distracted” by corpus evidence. Du and Chen (2022) made a bibliometric analysis of political discourse in translation studies from 1990 to 2020, revealing eight research themes, namely, linguistic analysis, ideology and manipulation, power embodied in political communication, interpreting and critical discourse analysis (CDA), the recontextualization of political discourse in media discourse, diplomatic translation, the representation of political speeches in news translation, and conflict and politics. Wang and Feng (2018) used corpus tools to identify high-frequency keywords in political discourse, analyze patterns of their translation and reveal how ideology is decontextualized. Pan (2020) used both comparable and parallel corpora, and found three types of shifts regularly made by Chinese government-affiliated translation institutions, namely shifts in interacting with readers, in representing actions, and in identifying participants.

3. The Construction of Images of the National Defense White Papers

3.1 High-frequency Words

3.1.1 High-frequency Words in the Original CNDNE

By using Weiciyun to segment CNDNE in the original, we can identify high-frequency words that play an important role in constructing the content of the text. Studying these words helps enhance our understanding of the key content and intentions of the white paper. In this study, we excluded function words from the high-frequency ones and retained content words such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. The top 30 high-frequency words are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. High-frequency words in the original CNDNE (Top 30)

Rank	Word	Freq.	Rank	Word	Freq.
1	中国	185	16	国防	40
2	军队	94	17	力量	38
3	安全	92	18	推进	37
4	国家	71	19	新时代	33
5	战略	68	20	世界	32
6	军事	67	21	和平	30
7	发展	63	22	加强	29
8	建设	62	23	开展	29
9	部队	52	24	制度	28
10	维护	52	25	坚持	28
11	国际	51	26	作战	28
12	合作	50	27	训练	28
13	组织	43	28	任务	26
14	国防费	42	29	体系	26
15	保障	42	30	机制	25

As can be seen from Table 1, the high-frequency nouns are 军队 (army), 国家 (country), 战略 (strategy), 军事 (military), 部队 (armed forces), 国防费 (defense expenditure), 国防 (national defense), 力量 (strength), 新时代 (new era), 世界 (world), 和平 (peace), 制度 (system), 任务 (task), and 机制 (mechanism), showing that in the new era of Chinese socialism (since the 19th CPC National Congress held on October 18, 2017), China attaches importance to military strategy and national defense force, calls for world peace, and pays attention to the construction of military systems and the planning of defense tasks, expenses and mechanisms. High-frequency verbs are 发展 (develop), 建设 (build), 维护 (maintain), 合作 (cooperate), 组织 (organize), 保障 (safeguard), 推进 (promote), 加强 (strengthen), 开展 (carry out), 坚持 (adhere to), 作战 (combat), and 训练 (train), which show China's national defense actions in the new era. The high-frequency words portray China as an active, constructive and friendly country that promotes development, construction and world peace and strengthens national security and international cooperation.

3.1.2 High-frequency Words in the English Version of CNDNE

Using AntConc, we conducted a word frequency analysis of the English version of CNDNE. We excluded function words from the high-frequency words and retained content words such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. The top 30 high-frequency words are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. High-frequency words in the English version of CNDNE (Top 30)

Rank	Word	Freq.	Rank	Word	Freq.
1	China	264	16	training	43
2	military	171	17	joint	42
3	defense	144	18	operations	42
4	security	128	19	PLA	39
5	forces	109	20	system	35
6	national	88	21	combat	34
7	armed	70	22	era	33
8	strategic	70	23	support	32
9	new	65	24	build	31
10	development	63	25	peace	30
11	countries	59	26	regional	28
12	international	56	27	world	28
13	expenditure	52	28	country	27
14	force	48	29	stability	26
15	cooperation	43	30	capabilities	25

According to Table 2, high-frequency nouns are defense, peace, force (s), development, countries, expenditure, cooperation, training, operations, peace, world, stability, and capabilities, which show that China attaches importance to military building and strengthens training to improve national defense capability, hopes for national security and stability and world peace, and highlights the development and international cooperation. Compared with those of the Chinese version, the top 30 high-frequency words in the English version are mostly nouns, instead of verbs, to some extent indicating that when it was translated from Chinese to English, the parts of speech of China's National Defense in the New Era have partially changed, especially from verbs to nouns. It makes the white paper more formal and solemn, and its narrative more objective.

3.1.3 High-frequency Words in 2022 U.S. NDS

With the help of AntConc, the high-frequency words in 2022 NDS can be analyzed. After removing function words, the top 30 high-frequency words are obtained, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. High-frequency Words in the 2022 NDS (Top 30)

Rank	Word	Freq.	Rank	Word	Freq.
1	department	117	16	strategy	29
2	partners	63	17	ability	28
3	deterrence	59	18	nuclear	28
4	force	58	19	states	28

5	allies	56	20	support	28
6	capabilities	54	21	aggression	27
7	defense	54	22	other	27
8	military	52	23	strategic	27
9	PRC	41	24	national	26
10	security	38	25	united	23
11	joint	35	26	change	22
12	threats	33	27	conflict	21
13	competitors	32	28	integrated	21
14	forces	31	29	strengthen	21
15	challenges	29	30	advantages	20

According to Table 3, high-frequency words are partners, deterrence, force, allies, capabilities, defense, military, PRC, security, threats, strategy, conflict, and advantages. We can see that the 2022 NDS repeatedly mentions the “threat” of China’s development to the United States. Also, the ideological opposition and conflicts of interest among countries are depicted, which could have a subtle and gradual impact on the thinking of the American people and its allies, leading the public to regard China as a threat. The keywords also show that the United States seeks to strengthen military alliances and partnerships, aiming to maintain its advantages and deter other countries.

3.1.4 Contrastive Analysis of CNDNE and 2022 NDS

In both the English Version of CNDNE and 2022 NDS, we find high-frequency words such as “national”, “security”, “force (s)”, “military”, “capabilities”, “joint”, and “defense”. With AntConc, the collocations of these high-frequency words and their corresponding paragraphs in the two defense white papers are searched, revealing some differences. Figure 1 and Figure 2 illustrate the word “military”. In the former, the high-frequency collocations of “military” include “the military and the government”, “the military and the people”, “military training”, “military exchanges and cooperation” and “military development”. In the latter, the high-frequency collocations of “military” include “military advantage (s)”, “military power”, “military action”, “military capability” and “military preparation”.

By examining the paragraphs where these high-frequency collocations appear, we can observe that China is striving to develop its military, enhance military training, maintain a good relationship between the armed forces and the government as well as the people, engage in military cooperation with other countries. This conveys that China is focused on the development of the military to safeguard national security, maintain international cooperation, and defend the country and its people. It demonstrates that China’s national defense is defensive rather than offensive. On the other hand, the United States repeatedly mentions deterring other countries to ensure the future sustainability of its military advantage and protect its international military status. The emphasis is on military preparation. This portrays the United States’ efforts to maintain its international hegemonic position. But rather than focusing on its military development to become stronger, the U.S. diverts significant attention to deterring other nations. It reflects the zero-sum mindset of the U.S. in problem-solving.

Total Hits: 171 Page Size 100 hits 1 to 100 of 171 hits

File	Left Context	Hit	Right Context
2019新时	an active role in poverty alleviation. The relationships between the	military	and the government and between the military and the
2019新时	relationships between the military and the government and between the	military	and the people are getting even closer. There is
2019新时	interests. China is striving to narrow the gap between its	military	and the world's leading militaries, and make up
2019新时	stride forward along its own path to build a stronger	military	and endeavor to achieve the great goal of developing
2019新时	to circumvent the post-war mechanism, Japan has adjusted its	military	and security policies and increased input accordingly, thus becoming
2019新时	integrated effort to build a prosperous country and a strong	military,	and striving for the coordinated development of national defense
2019新时	taken to enhance the government's efforts to support the	military	and their families, and to strengthen the military's
2019新时	its peaceful development. To strengthen China's national defense and	military	in the new era, it is imperative to comprehensively
2019新时	goals for the development of China's national defense and	military	in the new era are: to generally achieve mechanization
2019新时	fully strengthen the Party leadership and Party building of the	military	in the new era, a CMC meeting on party
2019新时	to use nuclear weapons against China. Continuing to Strengthen the	Military	in the Chinese Way This is the path forward
2019新时	China's Armed Forces on Strengthening Party Building in the	Military	in the New Era have been formulated to improve
2019新时	been formulated to improve the Party's institutions in the	military	in order to enhance its political and theoretical buildup,
2019新时	the armed forces in peacetime. China's armed forces put	military	training in an important position and take combat effectiveness
2019新时	to encourage officers and soldiers to step up military training.	Military	training in real combat conditions across the armed forces
2019新时	military is run. They are strengthening oversight and supervision in	military	training and combat readiness to uproot peacetime ills. They
2019新时	establish and improve the relevant supervision system, conduct supervision on	military	training for emergencies and combat across the services, implement

Search Query Words Case Regex Results Set All hits Context Size 10 token(s)

military Start Adv Search

Figure 1. High-frequency collocations of “military” in the English version of CNDNE

Total Hits: 52 Page Size 100 hits 1 to 52 of 52 hits

File	Left Context	Hit	Right Context
2022NDS.txt	competitor activities - those that, if left unaddressed, would endanger our	military	advantages and vital national interests now and in the
2022NDS.txt	ianage escalation. V. CAMPAIGNING The Department strengthens deterrence and gains	military	advantages not only by building Joint Force capabilities, but
2022NDS.txt	consequential competitor activities that if left unaddressed, would endanger our	military	advantages now and in the future. Even as we
2022NDS.txt	these activities more effective at building competitors' military and non-	military	advantages which, if left unaddressed, could endanger U.S.
2022NDS.txt	among these: The rate at which a competitor modernizes its	military,	and the conditions under which competitor aggression manifests, could
2022NDS.txt	the confidence, creativity, and commitment that have long characterized our	military	and the democracy that it serves. The Department will
2022NDS.txt	applications are making these activities more effective at building competitors'	military	and non-military advantages which, if left unaddressed, could
2022NDS.txt	to reshape the international order, and, increasingly, the economic, diplomatic,	military,	and technological power to do so." Meanwhile, Russia's
2022NDS.txt	Force depends. To construct an enduring foundation for our future	military	advantage, the Department-working in concert with other U.
2022NDS.txt	prevail in conflict when necessary. Fourth, to ensure our future	military	advantage, we will build a resilient Joint Force and
2022NDS.txt	technologies and capabilities may be employed and change our relative	military	advantage. A new pandemic or the impacts of climate
2022NDS.txt	States' technological edge has long been a foundation of our	military	advantage. The Department will support the innovation ecosystem, both
2022NDS.txt	Global Positioning System and other space-based capabilities that support	military	power and daily civilian life. The PRC or Russia
2022NDS.txt	robust overseas and basing infrastructure to allow it to project	military	power at greater distances. In parallel the PRC is
2022NDS.txt	S. homeland in an effort to jeopardize the U.S.	military'	s ability to project power and counter regional aggression;
2022NDS.txt	generation that drive unparalleled creativity, innovation, and adaptation; and our	military'	s combined-arms ethos and years of combat-tested
2022NDS.txt	set of tasks than we do currently. Campaigning to Gain	Military	Advantage, Enhance Deterrence, and Address Gray Zone Challenges. The

Search Query Words Case Regex Results Set All hits Context Size 10 token(s)

military Start Adv Search

Figure 2. High-frequency collocations of “military” in the 2022 NDS

In the top 30 high-frequency words of the English version of CNDNE and *the 2022 NDS*, there are also unique high-frequency words for each text. For example, in the English version of CNDNE, words such as “development”, “countries”, “international”, “cooperation”, “training”, “system”, “era”, “support”, “build”, “peace”, “world” and “stability” cannot be found among the top 30 high-frequency words of the *2022 NDS*. These words depict a pragmatic and moderate image of China in the new era that emphasizes the importance of development, construction, international cooperation, world peace and stability. Among them, the word “cooperation” appears 43 times, as shown in Figure 3. Some of its collocations include “developing friendly cooperation with all countries”, “strengthening international cooperation in arms control and non-proliferation”, “China’s participation in international space cooperation”, “enhancing trust among regional countries, China-Russia cooperation”, “the China-US relationship based on coordination, cooperation, and stability”, “cooperation with ASEAN countries”, “a China-Europe partnership for peace, growth, reform, and civilization, and maritime security cooperation”. The above examples showcase China’s recent diplomatic initiatives and diplomatic goals, demonstrating

China’s commitment to strengthening friendly and trustworthy cooperation with other countries while maintaining a policy of non-alignment with any nation.

File	Left Context	Hit	Right Context
2019新时	d with certain countries. China initiated the establishment of the Quadrilateral	Cooperation	and Coordination Mechanism (QCCM), a counter-terrorism cooperation and c
2019新时	teral Cooperation and Coordination Mechanism (QCCM), a counter-terrorism	cooperation	and coordination mechanism by the militaries of Afghanistan, China, Pakistan
2019新时	non-confrontation that targets no third party, expanding security and defense	cooperation	and creating a new model for regional security cooperation. The China-ASEAN
2019新时	l from land forces to multiple branches including the army, navy and air force.	Cooperation	and exchanges in personnel training have intensified. Since 2012, the PLA has s
2019新时	s have exchanged high-level visits and pushed for a hotline for border defense	cooperation	and mechanisms for border management and border defense exchanges. Sinc
2019新时	and institutions. The PLA actively promotes international security and military	cooperation	and refines relevant mechanisms for protecting China's overseas interests. To a
2019新时	ries and hence contribute to the China-US relationship based on coordination,	cooperation	and stability. In 2014, China's Ministry of National Defense (MND) and the US D
2019新时	etween the defense authorities, armies, navies and air forces, as well as practical	cooperation	in HADR, counter-piracy, and exchanges between academic institutions. China
2019新时	ively developing its military relations with European countries. Exchanges and	cooperation	in all areas are making sound progress. Targeting a China-Europe partnership fr
2019新时	in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR), strengthen international	cooperation	in arms control and non-proliferation, play a constructive role in the political st
2019新时	The PLA adheres to the principles of mutual trust, mutual benefit and win-win	cooperation	in carrying out pragmatic exchanges and cooperation with foreign militaries. S
2019新时	nued the sound development of exchange mechanisms at all levels, expanded	cooperation	in high-level exchanges, military training, equipment, technology and counter
2019新时	urity and defense cooperation and creating a new model for regional security	cooperation.	The China-ASEAN Defense Ministers' Informal Meeting and the ASEAN Defens
2019新时	roposes and constructively promotes initiatives to strengthen regional defense	cooperation.	The China-ASEAN Maritime Exercise-2018, the first between Chinese and ASEA
2019新时	in enhancing trust among regional countries through military exchanges and	cooperation.	The situation of the South China Sea is generally stable and improving as regio
2019新时	science, medical service, and equipment and technology. In addition, defense	cooperation	with ASEAN countries is moving forward. The military relationships between CI
2019新时	d jointly prevent conflicts and wars. China is committed to developing friendly	cooperation	with all countries on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. It

Figure 3. Collocations of “cooperation” in the English version of CNDNE

In the 2022 U.S. NDS, there are unique words including “partners”, “deterrence”, “allies”, “threats”, “competitors”, “challenges”, “nuclear”, “support”, “aggression”, “conflict”, “integrated”, “strengthen”, and “advantages”. These words present a belligerent and aggressive image of the United States that perceives rapidly developing countries as threats, seeks to strengthen military alliances to deter these nations and emphasizes conflict rather than cooperation. Among them, the word “partners” appears 63 times, as shown in Figure 4. The collocation of “Allies and partners” appears 47 times, and the verbs associated with it include “to reinforce robust deterrence”, “to modernize denial capabilities”, “to advance regional security goals that implement the higher-level aims of integrated deterrence”, “to ensure power projection in a contested environment”, “to deter, defend, and build resilience” and “will increasingly face the challenge of deterring two major powers with modern and diverse nuclear capabilities-the PRC and Russia”. In the 2022 U.S. NDS, the U.S. Allies and partners plan to focus on deterring other countries.

File	Left Context	Hit	Right Context
2022NDS.txt	(ISR) and electronic warfare platforms. The Department will collaborate with Allies and	partners	to build capacity along Europe's eastern flank, strengthening defensive anti-area/acc
2022NDS.txt	homeland and vital U.S. national interests, working "by, with, and through" our African	partners	to build states' capability to degrade terrorist organizations and contribute broadly to n
2022NDS.txt	lations in addressing regional security issues. The Department will work with Allies and	partners	to ensure power projection in a contested environment. The Department will also supp
2022NDS.txt	se collaboration with our counterparts across the U.S. Government and with Allies and	partners,	to ensure that potential foes understand the folly of aggression. The Department will al
2022NDS.txt	the Department will work across the interagency system and in concert with Allies and	partners	to advance regional security goals that implement the higher-level aims of integrated c
2022NDS.txt	tain its bedrock commitment to NATO collective security working alongside Allies and	partners	to deter, defend, and build resilience against further Russian military aggression and ac
2022NDS.txt	capability and resilience particularly in air and missile defense, while collaborating with	partners	to expose Iranian gray zone operations. The Department will continue to support U.S.
2022NDS.txt	orth American Aerospace Defense Command capabilities, and working with Allies and	partners	to increase shared maritime domain awareness. U.S activities and posture in the Arctic
2022NDS.txt	escalate to nuclear employment of any scale. We will work together with our Allies and	partners	to modernize denial capabilities, increase interoperability, improve resilience against at
2022NDS.txt	Allies. We will work closely with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and our	partners	to provide U.S. leadership, develop key enabling capabilities, and deepen interoperabil
2022NDS.txt	partment. The NDS further explains how we will collaborate with our NATO Allies and	partners	to reinforce robust deterrence in the face of Russian aggression while mitigating and pi
2022NDS.txt	and integrate them, developing our capabilities together with those of our Allies and	partners	to sustain and strengthen an international system under threat. This NDS has outlined t
2022NDS.txt	ilities. We will prioritize joint efforts with the full range of domestic and international	partners	in the defense ecosystem to fortify the defense industrial base, our logistical systems, a
2022NDS.txt	nian Attacks. To deter large-scale Iranian attacks on vital national security interests and	partners	in the region, the Department will work to increase partner capability and resilience par
2022NDS.txt	efensive capabilities and increasing options for reconstitution. We will assist Allies and	partners	in doing the same. Deterrence by Direct and Collective Cost Imposition. Denial and resi
2022NDS.txt	ity to hold key geographic and logistical chokepoints at risk. By joining with Allies and	partners	in efforts to enhance resilience to climate change, we will both strengthen defense rela
2022NDS.txt	nd cyber tools to military proxies allows competitors to threaten U.S. forces, Allies, and	partners,	in indirect and deniable ways. Climate Change and other Transboundary Challenges. Bu

Figure 4. Collocations of “partners” in the 2022 NDS

3.2 Subject Analysis

High-frequency subjects in the English translation of CNDNE and the 2022 NDS are shown in Table 4. This analysis reflects the respective word preferences and linguistic characteristics of the two texts. By conducting a comparative analysis, it can provide some references for modifying China’s defense white papers.

Table 4. Top 10 subjects in the English translation of CNDNE and the 2022 NDS

Rank	CNDNE		2022NDS	
	Subject	Freq.	Subject	Freq.
1	China	92	we	89
2	armed forces	46	Department	73
3	they	31	PRC	12
4	it	26	it	8
5	PLA	23	deterrence	8
6	expenditure	17	Russia	8
7	PAP	14	NDS	8
8	efforts	7	strategy	7
9	this	6	Campaigning	6
10	countries	6	The United States	5

The English translation of CNDNE consists of 553 sentences, with 92 sentences using “China” as the subject. On average, there is one sentence with “China” as the subject every 6 sentences. On the other hand, the 2022 NDS comprises 377 sentences, with 89 sentences starting with “we” as the subject. On average, there is one sentence starting with “we” every 4 sentences. The frequent use of “China” as the subject in the CNDNE translation contributes to a more objective narrative and reflects China’s independent and non-aligned foreign policy. Conversely, the predominant use of “we” as the subject in the 2022 NDS enhances the subjective narrative and emphasizes the role of issuing the NDS-rallying allies and partners under the collective pronoun “we” to consolidate and maintain its international hegemonic status. However, the excessive repetition of “China” as the subject in the English translation of CNDNE results in a lack of sentence variation. To address this, it is recommended to use pronouns such as “it” as a substitute for “China” to bring more diversity to sentence structure.

3.3 Summary

The two white papers depict contrasting images of China and the United States. China’s image, as portrayed in its white paper, is characterized as active, constructive, and friendly. It emphasizes China’s focus on development, construction, and world peace, as well as its efforts to strengthen national defense and enhance international cooperation. On the other hand, the image of the United States presented in its white paper is portrayed as bellicose, aggressive, and viewing rapidly developing nations as threats. It emphasizes its so-called “priority” and opposition, highlighting the United States’ efforts to deter other countries and maintain its first position by forming alliances with allies and partners.

4. Translation Problems and Strategies in the English Translation of CNDNE

The Chinese version of CNDNE has a total of 20,646 characters. By using Weiciyun, it was found that the total number of words in the text is 6,466, with an average sentence length of 37.59 words and a vocabulary density of 29.66%. However, in its English translation, the text consists of 13,315 words, with an average sentence length of 24.08 words and a vocabulary density of 19.50%. Compared to the original Chinese text, the English translation has undergone a reduction in length and a decrease in vocabulary density, indicating a simplification process during translation.

The full text of the 2022 U.S. NDS contains 9,391 words. Its average sentence length is 24.91 words, and its vocabulary density is 20.98%. In contrast, CNDNE has an average sentence length of 24.08 words and a vocabulary density of 19.50%. English native speakers and bilingual individuals have previously expressed that the English version of CNDNE has excessively long sentences and is difficult to comprehend, while the 2022 NDS is not. However, we can notice that the average sentence length and vocabulary density of the two documents are quite similar. So why the former was believed to be difficult to understand and read?

From the analysis above, we can see that the portrayal of China in the defense white paper is quite positive. However, if English readers find it challenging to read, they may struggle to even finish the first chapter of the white paper. As a result, they may not be able to gain a comprehensive understanding of China’s defense policy and its true image. How can we address this problem? The answer will be elaborated in the following sections.

4.1 Writing-style and Tone Adjustment

It is difficult to read through the English CNDNE, and one of the main reasons is that it remains faithful to the original text rather than considering the needs of the target audience. The translators of CNDNE did not realize that the readers are native English speakers, not domestic readers, and they did not make adjustments to the overall writing style and tone of the text. They simply translated the original text from Chinese into English. Zhao (2021) argues that being overly faithful to the original text in translation can lead to poor reception among audiences from different cultural backgrounds. To enhance the communication of China's defense strategy in the international community, it is important to change the mindset. Yuan (2005) suggests that translation for international communication should be directed toward the target language, ensuring that the recipients do not encounter obstacles in the process of receiving information. The translation should conform to the habits of the target language in terms of formatting and wording.

Table 5. Chapters in the English CNDNE and 2022 NDS

CNDNE (English)	Proportion	2022 NDS	Proportion
Preface	1.52%	Statement of the Department of Defense	9.11%
International Security Situation	9.86%	Introduction	10.99%
China's Defensive National Defense Policy in the New Era	13.42%	Security Environment	15.90%
Fulfilling the Missions and Tasks of China's Armed Forces in the New Era	15.90%	Defense Priorities	1.76%
Reform in China's National Defense and Armed Forces	27.36%	Integrated Deterrence	15.62%
Reasonable and Appropriate Defense Expenditure	10.17%	Campaigning	7.25%
Actively Contributing to Building a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind	20.43%	Anchoring Our Strategy in Allies and Partners and Advancing Regional Goals	13.74%
Closing Remarks	1.34%	Force Planning	7.44%
		Building Enduring Advantages	12.28%
		Risk Management	3.59%
		Conclusion	2.32%

Table 5 presents the chapter layout of the English translation of CNDNE and the 2022 NDS. The former is relatively lengthy. To address the problem of readers being unable to concentrate and read through the entire English version of CNDNE, we can draw inspiration from the writing style of the 2022 NDS. Therefore, the English version of CNDNE can begin with a chapter called "Introduction", which briefly summarizes the key points to be discussed in the following sections. It includes the purpose, current situation, actions, vision, and stance of China's defense. This will provide the target readers with a general understanding of China's defense policy and position, attract them to continue reading, and prevent them from stopping due to the perceived difficulty of the English translation, thus achieving the purpose of the English translation of China's national defense white papers. For instance, the introduction part of the translated CNDNE can be adjusted as follows:

As China pursues a DEFENSIVE national defense policy, the development of its military is aimed at protecting its people, rather than posing a threat or challenge to other countries. **Safeguarding China's sovereignty, security and development interests** is the fundamental goal of China's national defense in the new era. The South China Sea islands and Diaoyu Islands are inalienable parts of the Chinese territory. To solve the Taiwan question and achieve complete reunification of the country is in the fundamental interests of the Chinese nation.

The strategic **goals for the development** of China's national defense and military in the new era are:

- to generally achieve mechanization by the year 2020 with significantly enhanced informationization and greatly improved strategic capabilities;
- to comprehensively advance the modernization of military theory, organizational structure, military personnel, and weaponry and equipment in step with the modernization of the country and complete the modernization of national defense and the military by 2035; and
- to fully transform the people's armed forces into world-class forces by the mid-21st century.

4.2 Pre-translation Processing of ST

Given the differences between internal and external publicity of the national defense, ST can be processed and selected before the translation. Baker (2006) emphasizes that when we narrate, we not only represent social reality but also constitute it. That is, translators consciously utilize various framing strategies to select and interpret source texts, choose specific angles, emphasize certain content, and employ translation strategies to “interpret” and “rewrite” the source text for their political purposes. When we translate for international readers, we can draw on narrative techniques such as selective storytelling and cumulative storytelling, as utilized by Western media in translating our country’s enlistment videos (Han, 2018). When translating national defense white papers, we should consider China’s needs in external communication and foreign readers’ reading experience. It is important to highlight the key content that needs to be communicated externally, omit events that are not suitable for external promotion, and shape a positive image of China.

Translation example 1.

Source text: 深入推进党风廉政建设和反腐败斗争。严明政治纪律政治规矩，严肃查处郭伯雄、徐才厚、房峰辉、张阳等严重违纪违法案件。

Source text Romanized: Shēnrù tuījìn dǎngfēng liánzhèng jiànshè hé fǎnfùbài dòuzhēng. Yánmíng zhèngzhì jìlǜ zhèngzhì guīju, yánsù cháchǔ Guō Bóxióng, Xú Cǎihou, Fáng Fēnghuī, Zhāng Yáng děng yánzhòng wéifǎ ànjàn.

Target text: Improving Party conduct, upholding integrity and continuing the fight against corruption. China’s armed forces are tightening political discipline and rules, investigating and dealing strictly with grave violations of CPC discipline and state laws as in the cases of Guo Boxiong, Xu Caihou, Fang Fenghui, and Zhang Yang.

Anti-corruption is an internal event and policy, which is not needed to be translated and publicized overseas. Cases like this should be omitted during the translation rather than be rendered directly in the TT (see the above case).

4.3 Improving the Translation of Phrases

4.3.1 Translation Problems with Noun Phrases

There are a lot of formal noun phrases in almost every sentence in the English version of CNDNE, which are wordy and require focus to read. Yuan (2005) argues that Chinese and English languages have different cultural backgrounds, values, and ways of thinking, which manifest linguistically in Chinese expressions being excessively embellished, with ornate wording and synonymous repetition. Zeng (2005) believes that the writing style of the Chinese national defense white paper reflects the thinking characteristics of Chinese cultures, such as the pursuit of balanced sentence structures and rhythmic phonetics, which result in the accumulation of words and cumbersome sentences. Therefore, it is hard to keep the readers engaged. Therefore, by not reorganizing the information from the original text and simply translating word-for-word following the structure and order of the original, it inevitably results in the English translation of the national defense white paper having a Chinese structure, rather than looking like it was written in authentic English. This could be one of the reasons why English readers find it challenging to read. Yang (2008) suggests that in diplomatic translation, one should not limit oneself to the linguistic form of the source language. It is necessary to make adjustments and bold choices in the language form based on the speaker’s context, thoughts, and background of foreign relations. This includes additions, deletions and conversions. Therefore, this paper advocates avoiding excessive coordination of nouns in the translated text. The translation strategies include:

- 1) Categorizing and organizing the nouns before translation, eliminating redundant expressions;
- 2) Finding commonalities among the words to connect the vocabulary;
- 3) Appropriately transforming noun structures into verb structures;
- 4) Discarding the structure and form of the original Chinese sentence and translating based on the inherent meaning of the sentence.

Translation example 2.

Source text: 新时代中国国防和军队建设的战略目标是，到 2020 年基本实现机械化，信息化建设取得重大进展，战略能力有大的提升。同国家现代化进程相一致，全面推进军事理论现代化、军队组织形态现代化、军事人员现代化、武器装备现代化，力争到 2035 年基本实现国防和军队现代化，到本世纪中叶把人民军队全面建成世界一流军队。

Source text Romanized: Xīn shídài Zhōngguó guófáng hé jūnduì jiànshè de zhànlüè mùbiāo shì, dào 2020 nián jīběn shíxiàn jīxièhuà, xīnxià huà jiànshè qǔde zhòngdà jìnbù, zhànlüè nénglì yǒu dà de tīshèng. Tóng guójiā xiàndàihuà jìnchéng xiāng yīzhì, quánmiàn tuījìn jūnshì lǐlùn xiàndàihuà, jūnduì zǔzhī xíngtài xiàndàihuà, jūnshì rényuán xiàndàihuà, wǔqì zhuāngbèi xiàndàihuà, lìzhēng dào 2035 nián jīběn shíxiàn guófáng hé jūnduì xiàndàihuà, dào běn shìjì zhōngyè bǎ rénmin jūnduì quánmiàn jiànchéng shìjiè yīliú jūnduì.

Target text: The strategic goals for the development of China’s national defense and military in the new era are:

- to generally achieve mechanization by the year 2020 with significantly enhanced informationization and greatly improved strategic capabilities;
- to *comprehensively advance the modernization of military theory, organizational structure, military personnel, and weaponry and equipment in step with the modernization of the country and basically complete the modernization of national defense and the military by 2035*; and
- to fully transform the people's armed forces into world-class forces by the mid-21st century.

TT has the advantage of using bullet points to outline the strategic objectives of China's national defense and military construction in the new era, which makes it clearer. However, the italicized part is noticeably wordy, with three noun structures and repetitive use of the term "modernization". It appears overly formal and rigid. It could be improved by using verb structures, which would be more authentic and vivid. The italicized sentence could be modified as follows:

“• to effectively **modernize** national defense and the military by 2035, we will **focus on advancing** military theory, organizational structure, personnel, and equipment in line with the country's overall modernization efforts.”

Translation example 3.

Source text: 中国继续保持政治安定、民族团结、社会稳定的良好局面，综合国力、国际影响力、抵御风险能力明显增强，仍处于发展的重要战略机遇期，同时也面临多元复杂的安全威胁和挑战。

Source text Romanized: Zhōngguó jìxù bǎochí zhèngzhì āndìng, mízú tuánjī é, shèhuì wěndìng de liánghǎo júmiàn, zǎnghé gúduǎn de guójì yǐngxiǎnglì, dìyù fēngxiǎn nénglì míngxiǎn zēngqiáng, réng chūyù fāzhǎn de zhōngguó zhènlǜ è zhānlüè jīyù qī, tóngshí yě miànlín duōyuán fùzá de ānquán wēixié hé tiǎozhàn.

Target text: China continues to enjoy *political stability, ethnic unity and social stability*. **There has been a notable increase in China's overall national strength, global influence, and resilience to risks.** China is still in an important period of strategic opportunity for development. Nevertheless, it also faces diverse and complex security threats and challenges.

The Chinese language is known for its ornate and embellished expressions, which often involve excessive modifications. Therefore, it is a characteristic of the Chinese language to have numerous noun phrases listed in parallel within the same sentence. The 2022 NDS also includes nouns in parallel, although they are words instead of phrases.

The TT can be replaced by “China maintains political stability, ethnic unity, and social **harmony**. Notably, **it has witnessed** a significant enhancement in its national strength, global influence, and resilience against risks. China is currently in a critical phase of strategic development opportunities. However, it also confronts diverse and complex security threats and challenges”. “Political stability, ethnic unity, and social stability” can be modified to “political stability, ethnic unity, and social **harmony**” to avoid repetition of the word “stability” and make the vocabulary in the English translation more varied. Additionally, “There has been a notable increase in China's...” can be changed to “it has witnessed a significant enhancement” to unify the subject of the sentences as “China” and make them more coherent.

4.3.2 Translating Bulletpoint-in-numbers with Footnotes

In the English version of CNDNE, many phrases with Chinese characters for numbers, especially political terms, were not explained, making them difficult to understand. Readers sometimes have to search online to grasp the basic meanings of these phrases, which can be time-consuming. This could be another reason why it is challenging to complete reading the discourse. The translation strategy for such phrases is that the translators can add footnotes to the phrases with Chinese characters for numbers, providing a brief introduction to their basic meanings.

Translation example 4.

Source text: 中国坚持在和平共处五项原则基础上发展同各国的友好合作，尊重各国人民自主选择发展道路的权利，主张通过平等对话和谈判协商解决国际争端，反对干涉别国内政，反对恃强凌弱，反对把自己的意志强加于人。

Source text Romanized: Zhōngguó jiānchí zài héping gòngchǔ wǔ xiàng yuánzé jīchǔ shàng fāzhǎn tóng gèguó de yǒuhǎo hézuò, zūnzhòng gèguó rénmin zìzhǔ xuǎnzé fāzhǎn dàolù de quánlì, zhǔzhāng tōngguò píngděng duìhuà hé tánpàn xiéshāng jiějué guójì zhēngduān, fǎnduì gānshè biégúo nèizhèng, fǎnduì shì qiáng líng ruò, fǎnduì bǎ zìjǐ de yìzhì qiángjiā yú rén.

Target text: China is committed to developing friendly cooperation with all countries on the basis of the *Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence*. It respects the rights of all peoples to independently choose their own development path, and stands for the settlement of international disputes through equal dialogue, negotiation and consultation. China is opposed to interference in the internal affairs of others, abuse of the weak by the strong, and any attempt to impose one's will on others.

A footnote can be added to explain the meaning of the italicized phrase:

“Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence refer to mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other’s internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence.”

Translation example 5.

Source text: 2014 年，香山论坛升级为“一轨半”国际安全和防务对话平台。

Source text Romanized: 2014 nián, Xiāngshān Lùntán shēngjí wéi “yī guǐ bàn” guójì ānquán hé fángwù duìhuà píngtái.

Target text: In 2014, the Xiangshan Forum was upgraded to a *track-1.5* platform of international security and defense dialogue.

A footnote “Track 1.5 refers to a dialogue format that involves government officials and non-governmental participants, such as scholars and representatives from various sectors.” can be added.

In the 2022 NDS, there are also phrases with numbers, but the meanings of these phrases are either explained in the original text or the phrases themselves convey their intended meanings clearly. For example-The strategy identifies **four top-level defense priorities** that the Department must pursue to strengthen deterrence. First, we will defend the homeland. Second, we will deter strategic attacks against the United States, our Allies, and our partners. Third, we will deter aggression and be prepared to prevail in conflict when necessary. Fourth, to ensure our future military advantage, we will build a resilient Joint Force and defense ecosystem. We will continue to work with Congress as critical changes are made, informed by the recommendations of the Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault in the Military, to increase accountability; ensure we have **a culture of zero tolerance** for *harassment and assault*; enable active prevention, and support those who come forward. Finally, the Department will seek to eradicate all forms of extremism in our ranks.

4.4 Reducing Excessive Adverbs

In the English translation of CNDNE, there are 156 adverbs. However, not all adverbs in the original Chinese text need to be translated. Some of them, especially those indicating a strong emotional intensity, can be omitted, such as “actively”, “firmly”, “resolutely”, “unswervingly”, “earnestly” and “faithfully”. It is acknowledged that retaining these adverbs in the translation can serve as a means to illustrate the attitude and spirit of China to the global audience. However, in the 2022 NDS, there are fewer adverbs indicating emotional intensity-only four, including “urgently”, “seriously”, “actively” and “aggressively”. Therefore, this paper acknowledges that translating all adverbs indicating emotional intensity may appear excessive, potentially conveying an impression of excessive eagerness for accomplishments. This, in turn, has the potential to negatively impact China’s national image. Therefore, the translation strategy for addressing the issue of excessive adverbs is to remove adverbs indicating emotional intensity from the English translation.

Translation example 6.

Source text: 中国一贯积极参与国际军控、裁军和防扩散努力，反对军备竞赛，维护全球战略平衡和稳定，签署或加入了《不扩散核武器条约》等数十个多边军控、裁军和防扩散条约。

Source text Romanized: Zhōngguó yīguān jījī cānyù guójì jūnkòng, cáijūn hé fāng kuòsàn nǚlì, fānduì jūnbèi jìngsài, wéihù quánqiú zhànlüè píng hé wěndìng, qiānshǔ huò jiārùlè “bùkuòsàn héwùqì tiáoyuē” děng shùshí gè duōbiān jūnkòng, cáijūn hé fāng kuòsàn tiáoyuē.

Target text: China *actively* participates in international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. China objects to the arms race and strives to protect global strategic balance and stability. To this end, China has signed or acceded to dozens of relevant multilateral treaties including the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

“Actively” appears 23 times, followed by “resolutely” (9 times) and “firmly” (7 times). However, in the 2022 NDS, “actively” only appears once, which may suggest that the English version of CNDNE should exercise more restraint when using adverbs to convey emotions. Therefore, I believe that the adverb “actively” in the TT can be omitted to avoid giving English readers the impression that China has ambitious aspirations for international involvement.

Translation example 7.

Source text: 中国坚持同地区国家一道维护和平稳定，坚定维护各国依据国际法所享有的航行和飞越自由，维护海上通道安全。

Source text Romanized: Zhōngguó jiānchí tóng dìqū guójiā yīdào wéihù héping wěndìng, jiāndìng wéihù gèguó yījù guójì fǎ suǒ xiāngyǒu de hángxíng hé fēiyuè zìyóu, wéihù hǎishàng tōngdào ānquán.

Target text: China continues to work with regional countries to *jointly* maintain peace and stability. It *firmly* upholds freedom of navigation and overflight by all countries in accordance with international law and safeguards the security of sea lines of communication (SLOCs).

There is a mistake in the TT: “work with regional countries to *jointly* maintain peace and stability” should be revised as “*jointly* work with regional countries to maintain peace and stability”. In this context, “firmly” emphasizes China’s strong support for the lawful rights of other countries. However, it can be omitted to avoid an overly solemn tone. This does not mean all the excessive adverbs could be omitted, as some are needed in terms of tones and stances in the English translations. Take example 8.

Translation example 8.

Source text: 中国坚持“和平统一、一国两制”方针，推动两岸关系和平发展，推进中国和平统一进程，坚决反对一切分裂中国的图谋和行径，坚决反对任何外国势力干涉。

Source text Romanized: Zhōngguó jiānchí "héping tǒngyī, yīguó liǎngzhì" fāngzhēn, tuīdòng liǎng'àn guānxì héping fāzhǎn, tuījìn Zhōngguó héping tǒngyī jìnchéng, jiǎnjué fānduì yīqiè fēnliè Zhōngguó de túmóu hé xíngjìng, jiǎnjué fānduì rènghé wàiguó shìlì gānshè.

Target text: China adheres to the principles of “peaceful reunification”, and “one country, two systems”, promotes peaceful development of cross-Strait relations, and advances peaceful reunification of the country. Meanwhile, China *resolutely* opposes any attempts or actions to split the country and any foreign interference to this end.

The verb “oppose” already conveys a strong determination to disagree, so there is no need to translate the adverb “resolutely” in the TT. However, the translator chose to retain it, in an attempt to emphasize China’s strong opposition to any actions that undermine its sovereignty and domestic affairs.

4.5 Using Words with Proper Connotations

The choosing of words is not precise enough, which can mislead English readers, lead to misconceptions, and potentially cause difficulties in understanding and harm China’s national image. To address this, the translation strategy includes:

- 1) Translators should enhance their bilingual proficiency, increase political sensitivity, and actively consult parallel texts and reference materials.
- 2) Reviewers should focus on establishing priorities in reviewing translations and improving political sensitivity.

Translation example 9.

Source text: 反分裂斗争形势更加严峻，民进党当局顽固坚持“台独”分裂立场，拒不承认体现一个中国原则的“九二共识”，加紧推行“去中国化”、“渐进台独”，图谋推动“法理台独”，强化敌意对抗，挟洋自重，在分裂道路上越走越远。

Source text Romanized: Fǎn fēnliè dòuzhēng xíngshì gèngjiā yánjùn, mǐn jìndǎng dāngjú wángù jiānchí "Tái dú" fēnliè lìchǎng, jù bù chéngrèn tǐxiàn yīgè Zhōngguó yuánzé de "jiǔ'èr gòngshí", jiājīn tuīxíng "qù Zhōngguó huà", "jiàn jìn Tái dú", túmóu tuīdòng "fǎlǐ Tái dú", qiáng huà dìyì duìkàng, xié yáng zìzhòng, zài fēnliè dàolù shàng yuè zǒu yuè yuǎn.

Target text: The fight against separatists is becoming more acute. The Taiwan authorities, led by the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), stubbornly stick to “Taiwan independence” and refuse to recognize the 1992 Consensus, which embodies the one-China principle. They have gone further down the path of separatism by stepping up efforts to sever the connection with the mainland in favor of gradual independence, pushing for de jure independence, intensifying hostility and confrontation, and borrowing the strength of foreign influence.

Independence refers to the independence of a nation, but Taiwan has historically been a part of China. Promoting “Taiwan independence” is an act of separating the country. As the Anti-Secession Law adopted by the NPC has classified the term “Taiwan Independence” as an act of separating China, it is more appropriate to translate the term “台独” as “**Taiwan Secession Attempts**” or “**Taiwan Separatism**,” which have been widely adopted by mainstream Chinese media. When translating the defense white papers, it is essential to consider the political implications of vocabulary, conduct thorough research, and exercise caution in translation.

4.6 Multimodalizing the Translation

Multimodality can make the text more engaging, readable, and interactive. Incorporating multimodality into the text enriches the ways information is conveyed, provides a more immersive reading experience, and helps readers better understand and digest the content. Wang (2019b) suggests that combining text with illustrations can effectively compensate for the limitations of text alone.

The cover of the U.S. 2022 NDS is predominantly blue. In the center, there is a world map with the United States at the center, accompanied by the prominent words “2022 National Defense Strategy.” The map is surrounded by stars. At the top, there is the Pentagon’s logo, along with the words “U.S. Department of Defense” and red and white stripes, incorporating elements of the American flag — blue, white, red, and stars. The second page displays the Department of Defense emblem and the

words “2022 National Defense Strategy.” The third and fourth pages contain the Defense Secretary’s address, ending with his signature. The fifth page presents the table of contents, featuring images of weapons and military personnel from the US Army, Navy, and Air Force, aiming to showcase America’s military power. Within the main body of the text, each chapter’s title is represented at the top of the page using blue letters. The actions that the United States will take are presented in bullet points, making them clearer and easier to read. Key points within each section are highlighted in blue, bold, larger, and italicized text, such as “*Strategic Competition with the People’s Republic of China (PRC)*”. Such titles are the key to the discourse. Using different colors and larger fonts can more effectively attract readers’ attention and draw their focus to these key pieces of information, thus achieving the purpose of the U.S. Department of Defense in publishing the white paper.

The English translation of CNDNE utilizes multimodality to a limited extent, merely including bold chapter titles, presenting China’s national defense goals in bullet points, presenting some terms such as the names of military exercises in italics and bold, converting Chinese tables into English, adding an Acronyms at the end of the white paper. To make fuller use of multimodality in the translation of the white paper, adjustments can be made to present the content. For example:

1) Highlighting the key points in different colors, larger fonts, bold, italics, capitalization, underlining, and quotation marks, allowing English readers to quickly capture the key information and enhancing the expression of emotion and impact.

Translation example 10.

Source text: 中国的社会主义国家性质，走和平发展道路的战略抉择，独立自主的和平外交政策，“和为贵”的中华传统文化，决定了中国始终不渝奉行防御性国防政策。

Source text Romanized: Zhōngguó de shèhuì zhǔyì guójiā xìngzhì, zǒu hépíng fāzhǎn dàolù de zhànlüè juézé, dúlì zìzhǔ de hépíng wàijiāo zhèngcè, "hé wéi guì" de Zhōnghuá wénhuà chuántǒng, juédinglè Zhōngguó shǐzhōng bù yú fēngxíng fāngyù xìng guófāng zhèngcè.

Target text: The socialist system of China, the strategic decision to follow the path of peaceful development, the independent foreign policy of peace, and the best of cultural traditions – considering peace and harmony as fundamentals – determine that China will pursue a national defense policy *that is defensive in nature*.

TT can be revised as “... that China was and is pursuing a **DEFENSIVE** national defense policy.”

2) Incorporating both textual and visual elements by inserting images, charts, and graphs within the text to enhance expression. This can be a collaborative effort between the translators, the original authors, and the graphic editors of the defense white paper to determine to add some visual elements that make the document more engaging and visually appealing.

3) The layout can be enhanced by improving the paragraph structure, page design, and differentiation of various heading levels. This can be achieved by using different font sizes or styles to highlight the varying levels of headings and distinguish different sections or chapters of the text.

5. Conclusion

By comparing and contrasting the different versions of the China’s national defense white paper, and those of China and the U.S., this study finds out the similarities and differences of the national defense white papers in terms of wording, sentences, textures and multimodalities based on a self-built parallel corpus. Also, it is revealed that China and the U.S. constructed different national images in their defense white papers. Furthermore, with a cross-lingual corpora analysis and text mining, this study has proposed four suggestions for the English translation of China’s national defense white papers: First, being reader-oriented and appropriately adjusting the narrative style and tone of the translation. If the English translation is difficult to read, we can add an introduction of the key information at the beginning of the discourse. Second, selectively translating the original text due to the distinction between domestic and international promotion. Third, translating the nouns flexibly through methods such as addition, deletion and conversion, while improving bilingual proficiency and political sensitivity; and finally, fully utilizing multimodal translation techniques. These findings are significant for the composing and translation of China’s national defense white papers in the future.

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Chinese-English Translation Strategies of Children's Picture Books from the Perspective of Multimodality —A Case Study of *The Monkey King* Series

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Abstract

Children's picture books, as a marginal genre of children's literature with rich graphic and textual expressions, play a good role in promoting the overall development of children's language and cognition. In recent years, many foreign children's picture books have been translated into Chinese for readers in China, but relatively little attention has been paid to the original Chinese picture books, and the research for children's picture book translations rich in Chinese elements and culture has not attracted much attention. Therefore, this study first selects the original Chinese picture book *The Monkey King* and then uses literature review and case study methods, to discuss the translation strategies of children's picture books from a multimodal perspective, hoping to provide a preliminary reference for the translation practice of original Chinese children's picture books.

Keywords: children's picture books, multimodality, Chinese-English translation strategies

1. Introduction

In the field of children's literature, picture books are a special genre, which is characterized by illustrations and texts, featuring beautiful pictures and interesting storylines. Excellent children's picture books promote imagination, language skills, and cognitive abilities. In recent years, picture books have been loved by Chinese children and parents. In the early 21st century, children's picture books developed rapidly, and a large number of foreign picture books were introduced into China. However, the influence of domestic original picture books is far lower than that of foreign picture books. Therefore, to spread Chinese original picture books to the world, scholars should pay attention to the translation of Chinese original picture books, so that more Chinese excellent picture books can go abroad.

At present, the research on children's picture book translation in China is still quite limited, and there is very little research on the application of multimodal theory, which will be discussed in the literature review section. Generally speaking, as of January 2022, there are only 486 articles in CNKI (China National Knowledge Infrastructure; Chinese: 中国知网) under the theme of “绘本翻译/Huiběn fānyì” (picture book translation), compared with two under “儿童文学翻译/Ér tóng wénxué fānyì”. A large part of the picture book translation focuses on English-to-Chinese translation, and few articles focus on Chinese-to-English translation. After adding the search for “multimodality”, there are 43 results. Most of these articles adopt the Discourse Analysis Framework under systematic functional linguistics and have less discussion of the relationship between images and text. At the same time, searching for “multimodal pragmatics” yields 34 results. Therefore, at present, few translation studies focus on the combination of multimodal pragmatic theory with picture book translation.

This paper uses the Image-text Relations Theory of Martinec & Salway (2005) to analyze the Chinese-to-English translation of *the Monkey King* picture book, aiming to provide translation strategies for the English translation of children's picture books. To achieve the above objectives, the following two research questions are proposed:

- 1) What are the characteristics of the image-text relations between the Chinese and English versions?
- 2) What pragmatic strategies did the translator use in the translation?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Multimodal Discourse Analysis

Over the past 20 years, Multimodal Discourse Analysis has achieved remarkable results. First, scholars have focused on the importance of other modalities besides language. Michael O'Toole was the first one to extend semiotic resources beyond language, and he conducted research in multimodal discourse frameworks in many fields of art. Under this framework, there are three kinds of meanings, namely conceptual meanings, interactive meanings, and compositional meanings. Subsequently, based on Halliday's (1994) systematic theory of functional linguistics, Kress and van Leeuwen proposed Visual Grammar to describe the semiotic resources of images and analyze the visual aspects of these patterns. Effect. Their book, *Reading Images. A Grammar of Visual Design* is one of the most influential studies in the field of multimodality (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996). Another research trend is intermodality. The concept of multimodality questions the division of meaning between disciplines, arguing that meaning is not a simple superposition of symbolic resources, but depends on the interaction between modalities, that is linkage (Jewitt, 2009). Barthes (1977) distinguished three kinds of relationship between images and texts from the

perspective of semiotics: anchorage, which means the subordination of text; Illustration, which means the subordination of images; Relay, which means equal position. Martinec & Salway (2005) studied the intermodality in children's books, advertising, and other media, and proposed a new image-text relationship system Image-text Relations Theory based on the theory of Barthes and Halliday.

In addition, domestic research on multimodal translation is mainly limited to two major fields: film and television translation and multimodal teaching. Film and television translation mainly focuses on subtitle translation, with a single film and television work as the research object, and there are many repeated studies. In the field of multimodal teaching, many research results have been achieved in the field of interpreting teaching, and the research on multimodal interpreting corpus provides a reference for interpreting teaching (Liu, 2015). The multimodal research framework is relatively vague, and there is a problem of conceptual confusion.

Pictures books have drawn the attention of researchers in recent decades, but domestic research on picture translations is relatively small, and there is no systemic theoretical structure. In recent years, there have been an increasing number of multimodal research on picture books both at home and abroad. The book *Translating Picture Books: Restoring Language, Sight, and Hearing for Child Audiences* was released by Routledge in 2018 (Oittinen et al., 2018). This book examines the relationship between languages, images, and sounds in picture book translation from the perspective of dual semiotics and multimodality, including the relationship between image and text, audiovisual translation, cultural rewriting, and other topics. What's more, under the background of the Belt and Road Initiative, there have been studies on the translation of Chinese cultural translations from the perspective of pragmatic translation theory combined with multimodality (Mo & Li, 2021), and then put forward the multimodal pragmatic translation strategies in the field of cultural foreign translation.

2.2 Pragmatics Translation

Foreign translation views have grown to include two new perspectives: multimodal pragmatic analysis and experimental pragmatic analysis. Sara Dicerto's 2018 work *Multimodal Pragmatics and Translation: New Models for Source Text Analysis contains the most recent study on multimodal pragmatic analysis*. It offers a model for analyzing multimodal source text, which aids in understanding how multimodal text communicates meaning and how to cope with a multimodal text translation. Foreign experimental pragmatics has produced beneficial outcomes. The most common experimental techniques are questionnaire surveys, interviews, eye monitoring technology, time-related potential, and functional magnetic resonance, among others.

The first to introduce pragmatic theory into translation studies was Hatim and Mason (1990). In 1979, Xu Guozhang introduced Austin's book *How to Do Things with Words* in China. The two scholars pointed out that the two languages have different means of realizing "illiteracy power", that is, English adopts the form of syntax, while Chinese uses vocabulary (He & Duan, 1988). Additionally, the first to systematically engage in the study of pragmatic translation was Gutt (1998).

Li (2008) analyzed the current situation of pragmatic translation in China, combed the research results from 2011 to 2020, and found that domestic scholars use more perspectives on pragmatic translation theory, including pragmatic equivalence theory, relevance theory, cross-cultural pragmatics, adaptation theory, relevance theory, etc. It is stated that the present scope of pragmatic theory is restricted and that the study subjects are confined to literary translation and subtitle translation.

The author searched CNKI and found that there are only three research papers in terms of multimodal pragmatic translation published in 2022. One of them is a review article and one put forward suggestions on the multimodal pragmatic translation of Chinese characteristic discourse from a macro perspective (Hong, Guo & Wu, 2022), and the other adopted the method of case study, discussing the multimodal pragmatic translation strategies of cultural foreign translation, finally found three kinds of image-text relationship strategies, and achieved the pragmatic functions of perspective transformation, pragmatic enrichment, and thematicization (Mo & Li, 2022). It can be found that there are still few studies on multimodal pragmatic analysis, and there is a large research gap.

3. Method

This paper selects one typical Chinese original picture book *The Monkey King* for a case analysis to partially fill the gap. This book has been translated into many languages and distributed all over the world. Foreign Languages Publishing House reprinted the English version of *Monkey King* several times in 1986, 2007, and 2010. In March 2023, Zhaohua Publishing House published *The Monkey King series* to provide excellent traditional Chinese cultural picture books for overseas teenagers (Qin & Xie, 2023).

This paper integrates two approaches: multimodal pragmatic analysis and pragmatic equivalence for the image and text dimensions. The multimodal pragmatic analysis proposed by Chen and Qian (2011) draws on the framework of systemic functional linguistics. Starting from the purpose of communication, it studies how the modal forms interact to form a certain discourse meaning, and combines two multimodal examples to verify the feasibility of the structure. Also, The Image-text Relations Theory proves to apply to the exploration of multimodal meaning in the framework of pragmatics. (Dicerto, 2018). Also, it can be used to analyze the image-text relationship in a hypermedia system (Martinec et Salway, 2015). Pragmatic

equivalence refers to the fact that in form the purpose is not necessarily equivalent to the original language, but in the connotative sense the equivalence must be maintained. In translation practice, Lu (2013) systematically sorted out the commonly used translation strategies of pragmatic equivalence, and there are mainly five kinds.

3.1 Multimodal Pragmatic Analysis Framework

At present, multimodal studies in the fields of socio-semiotics, systemic-functional grammar, and discourse analysis are remarkable (Lemke, 1998; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001). Chen and Qian (2011) mentioned that the analysis based on the existing theoretical frameworks of pragmatics only focuses on the influence of the information conveyed by the language ontology on communication, and lacks the full consideration of non-linguistic factors such as image, music, mood manner and ignores the important role of non-linguistic modalities that participate in meaning construction, hence it has great limitations in the process of meaning construction. Based on the comprehensive theoretical framework of Systemic Functional

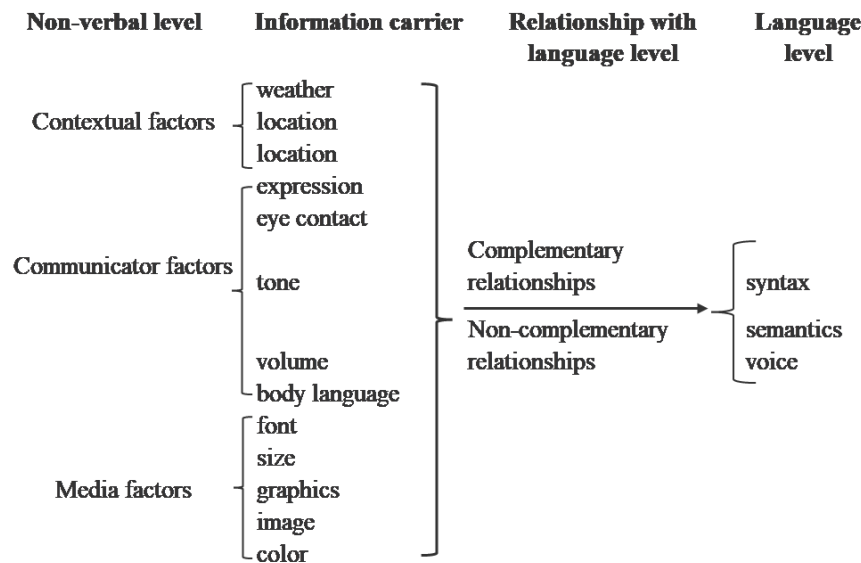


Figure 1. Multimodal Pragmatic Analysis Framework (Chen & Qian, 2011)

Linguistics, we construct a framework for multimodal pragmatic analysis from the perspective of communication itself. As shown in Figure 1, the multimodal information of pragmatic analysis can be divided into three factors: situational factors, communicator factors, and media factors. Among them, situational factors include weather, place, and noise; communicator factors include facial expressions, eyes, tone of voice, volume, and body language. The relationship between non-language factors and language factors is complementary and non-complementary.

As shown in Figure 2, the Image-text Relations Theory explores the image-text relationship from the two aspects of status and the logic-semantic relationship. In terms of status, the two scholars divide it into equality (images and texts are independent or complementary to each other) and inequality (images and texts belonging to affiliation) two relationships. As for the logico-semantic relationship, it further includes extension and projection. Expansion is further classified as elaboration, extension, and enhancement. Elaboration means that the pictures and texts tell the same story. It encompasses two kinds of relations: exposition (when the semantics expressed by the image and the semantics expressed by the text table are the same) and exemplification (when the semantics expressed by the text and the semantics expressed by the image are mutually subordinate). Extension refers to the fact that either one of the Pictures and texts adds new information to the other. Enhancement refers to the fact that one side of the picture and text explains environmental factors such as time, space, and causality for the other side.

It should be mentioned that there are two subsystems under the Image-text Relations Theory that can be further divided into sub-items. Different combinations can be formed between subitems. It is reasonable and effective to apply Image-text Relations Theory to Multimodal Discourse Analysis. The Image-text Relations Theory proves to apply to the exploration of multimodal meaning in the framework of pragmatics. (Dicerto, 2018). Also, it can be used to analyze the image-text relationship in a hypermedia system (Martinec et Salway, 2015). Some scholars used this theory to analyze the relationship between the image information of movie subtitles (Chen & Zhang, 2017). Some scholars used the classic picture “Han Xizai’s Night Banquet” collected by the Palace Museum as a corpus and chose the theory of image-text relationship to study the relationship between intermodality and pragmatic strategies in cultural translation (Mo&Li, 2021). Therefore, the author

chooses the Image-text Relations Theory (Martinec et Salway, 2015) as the theoretical framework. The theory of image-text relationship provides a theoretical basis for the analysis of the multimodal translation of Source Text, and multimodal analysis provides an effective method for multimodal analysis.

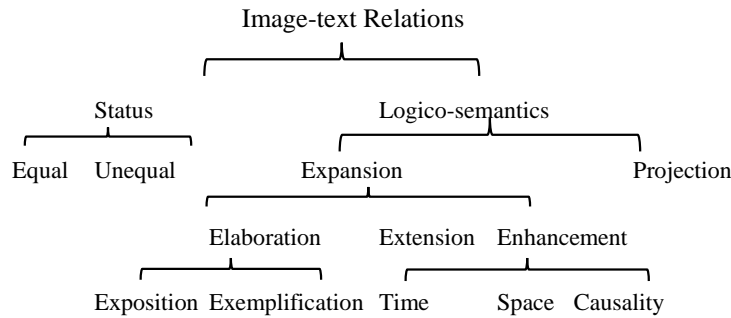


Figure 2. Image-text Relations Theory (Martinec & Salway, 2015)

3.2 Pragmatic Equivalence in Translation

Professor He (1997) believed that the core of pragmatic translation is pragmatic equivalence, that is, the translator should make it simple for the target text readers to comprehend through the pragmatic comparison between the two languages. To achieve pragmatic equality, translation methods must be chosen. Scholar He (1997) proposed that “pragmatic translation can also study the issues of pragmatic-linguistic equivalence and social-pragmatic equivalence through the comparison of two languages”.

Pragmatic linguistic equivalence refers to the fact that in form the purpose is not necessarily equivalent to the original language, but in the connotative sense the equivalence must be maintained. Social pragmatic equivalence means that to avoid obstacles to cross-cultural understanding for the target readers, the translator should fully consider the social and cultural differences, and express the culturally loaded messages according to the cultural habits of the target text, to achieve the purpose of communication. In translation practice, to achieve the purpose of pragmatic equivalence, translators often adopt the translation strategy of domestication. (Chen, 2003). Lu (2013) systematically sorted out the commonly used translation strategies of pragmatic equivalence, and there are mainly five kinds:

- 1) Context-oriented—translating the functional meaning of the words.
- 2) Pragmatic integration—reproducing the same connotative meaning by deleting and rewriting the source text’s phrase structure and linguistic style, instead of adhering to the source text’s form
- 3) Pragmatic modification—in accordance with the Target Language’s expression patterns, so that the target text can more closely recreate the meaning of the source text.
- 4) Pragmatic explicitation—adapting to cultural differences. Pragmatic explicitation is the expression of concealed cultural information in the source text by adding phrases to help readers comprehend and identify the translation.
- 5) Pragmatic politeness—pay attention to pragmatic appropriateness.

Last but not least, Lu (2013) believes that pragmatic translation leaves a large space for the translator to deal with freely. On the premise of correctly understanding the author’s intention of the source text, the translator consciously chooses the appropriate translation strategy to effectively realize the purpose and the communication between the reader and the source text.

4. Results and Discussion

Due to the relatively old version, this study only takes the fourteenth *Monkey Raises Havoc in Jindou Cave* as the research object. Thus, this study intends to examine the pragmatic translation strategies under the theoretical framework of Image-text Relations Theory with the employment of a quantitative method. This study probes into the translation strategies of the book in three dimensions. To be exact, the first one is pragmatic enrichment; the second one is pragmatic enrichment; the third one is pragmatic integration and coherence, and the fourth one is domestication, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Image-text Relations of The Monkey King

Image-text Relation of the source text	Image-text Relation of the target text	Frequency	Pragmatic Strategy
Exposition	Exemplification	12	pragmatic enrichment
Extension	Enhancement	14	pragmatic integration

Extension	Exemplification	56	domestication
Total pages		82	

4.1 Case Analysis of Extension to Enhancement



Picture 1

Translation example 1.

Source text: 师徒四人越过高山峻岭，望见山坳中有一处高耸的楼台。唐僧对悟空说：“徒弟啊，我又冷又饿，你去那里化些斋饭来吃吧。”悟空睁眼望去，只见那里有一股恶气飘在上空。

Target text: One day as the four pilgrims were going over a high mountain, the Tang Priest pointed to a gully and said, “Disciple, look at the towers and houses over there. Let us go and beg for some food before we continue on our way.”

Monkey immediately took a hard look. He saw evil-looking mists and clouds hanging over the place.

Referring to Image-text Relations Theory, Extension means that one modality adds new information to another modality in any aspect of the participant, the process, or the environment. When one modality modifies the time, space, cause, and other environmental factors, it is represented as Enhancement (Martinec & Salway, 2005).

As shown in Picture 1, in the image, the Monkey King is standing on a high mountain, looking down at the tower below the mountain. In addition to the depiction of the Monkey King, the source text includes the scene of the master and his three apprentices crossing the high mountains and Tang Priest talking to the Monkey King which the image doesn't contain. The image only depicts part of the content of the text, and the source text extends the relationship and expands new character information. Thus, the relation between the source text and the image is an Extension.

In addition to the Extension, there is one more relationship between the image and the target text that provides specific time and space information “to a gully” and “before we continue on our way” to make the sentence shorter and the structure more concise. Thus, the relationship between the target text and the image is Enhancement. Referring to the previous research, Mo & Li (2021) have discussed that the translator used the strategy of enhancement to introduce the historical background and the role information of Chinese traditional pictures. From Extension to Enhancement, it can be found that the pragmatic strategies used by translators are coherence and pragmatic integration. To conform to the sentence structure and logical relationship of the readers, the translator added the specific direction “to the gully” in the scene where Tang Priest is speaking to Monkey King. Moreover, the dialogue “before we continue on our way” clearly shows the order of actions which is highly logical.

Picture 2

Translation example 2.

Source text: 三人吵吵嚷嚷，惊动了洞中的魔头。原来那座楼房是妖怪变化的，他每天在这里抓人。他见捆住了人，就叫上小妖，收了楼台房屋之形，把唐僧师徒三个一齐捉到洞里。

Target text: As they began to despair, the towers and buildings disappeared, and a huge cave rose in front of them. The buildings were just the magic of an anvil spirit that had been waiting there to catch people. Now many little demons came rushing out of the cave and took the three of them inside.

As shown in Picture 2, the picture shows the scene of the little demon walking toward the master and his three apprentices with weapons. The ST not only expresses this scene but also explains that the building was changed by the monster, adding new information and expanding the scope of the text. Therefore, the image-text relationship is an Extension.

Compared with the ST, the translation also narrates the scene of the disappearance of the building, which paves the way for the later exposition that the monster is transformed from a building. Therefore, the image-text relationship is Enhancement.

The translator adopted a pragmatic integration strategy. Lu (2013) illustrated different writing habits of news texts between China and Western countries. The practice of listing a long list of official titles and names is in line with Chinese people's expectations and reading habits, but in the West, the news tends to discuss the main subject. Equally, on this page, the translator did not translate the action of being noisy but translated their disappointment making the sentence structure more in line with the reading habits of the target readers. It reproduces the same semantics as ST, but a more vivid description than it.

4.2 Case Analysis of Exposition to Exemplification



Picture 3

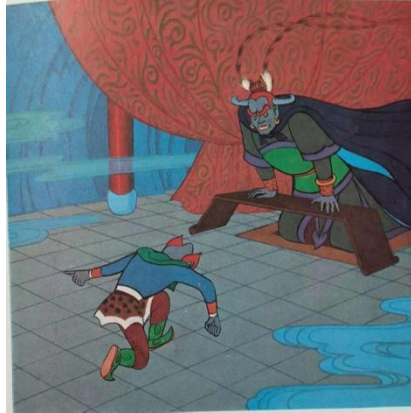
Translation example 3.

Source text: 悟空笑道：“泼物！正合老孙之意！走上来，吃我一棒！”那妖怪挺钢枪劈面迎来，两人大战三十回合，不分胜负。

Target text: Monkey sneered at the demon and shouted, “Shut up, damned beast! Come here and taste my cudgel!” The demon thrust his spear at Monkey. After thirty hard-fought rounds, neither of them had won or lost.

Exposition means that one modality shares the same information with another modality. Exemplification refers to the representation of information from one modality to another utilizing detailed description (Martinec & Salway, 2005).

As shown in Picture 3, the picture shows the scene of the battle between the Monkey King and the monster, which is consistent with the semantics of the ST, so it is the Exposition relationship between the image and ST. While, the words “sneered, shouted” in the translation narrate the facial expression of the Monkey King, hence the image-text relation is Exemplification. From Exposition to Exemplification, the translator adopted the strategy of pragmatic enrichment, which means making the depiction more concrete. When describing Monkey King’s laugh, the translator did not directly translate the verb but highlighted the disdainful expression and the sharp voice. Such processing can quickly convey strong emotions and attract target readers.



Picture 4

Translation example 4.

Source text: 悟空笑道: ”泼物! 正合老孙之意! 走上来, 吃我一棒!”那妖怪挺钢枪劈面迎来, 两人大战三十回合, 不分胜负。那小妖急忙进洞报告, 魔王听了, 满心欢喜说: ”我自从天宫下凡到现在, 还没试过武艺, 正等他来, 一起比划比划呢!”

Target text: One little devil hurried in to report. “Your Majesty, there’s a monk at the gate. He’s called Monkey King, the Great Sage Equaling Heaven, and he’s asking for his master.” The demon was delighted to hear this.” Just the person I wanted to see,” he said.

As shown in Picture 4, the picture shows the scene of listening to the demon’s report. The description in the ST is consistent with the semantics of the image. Therefore, the ST and the image are in an Exposition relationship.

ST does not explain who “he” is but only highlights the information of two characters that are the same as the image. Compared to ST, TT describes that “he” is Monkey King, explains his life experience, and makes the image of Monkey King more concrete, thus TT and the image are in the relationship of Exemplification.

It can be found that the translator also adopted the strategy of pragmatic enrichment. As the previous study stated, the translator did not directly translate the pronouns of the ST but enriched the relatively brief description in the ST to highlight the superior strength of Monkey King.

4.3 Case Analysis of Extension to Exemplification



Picture 5

Translation example 5.

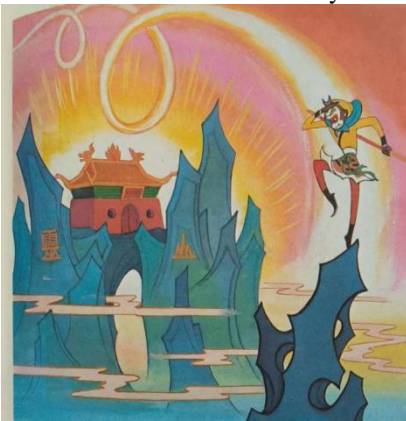
Source text: 悟空带着水伯又来叫门。那妖怪听说，提枪就来迎战。石门刚一打开，水伯就将白玉瓶往里一倒，半条黄河的水直冲向洞门。

Target text: As they arrived at the gate of the cave, Monkey shouted, "Open up, devils!" Taking his ring, the demon king was ready to come out again. Just as the doors opened, the river god threw all the water in his white jade bottle into the cave.

As shown in Picture 5, the image expresses the scene where the water god is pouring water from a white jade bottle. In addition to describing the above scene, the ST also uses the Yellow River analogy of water displacement to provide new information. Therefore, the ST and the image are in an extension relationship.

There is no analogy to the Yellow River in the translation, but a description of Monkey King's language is added to highlight Monkey King's momentum when he faces the battle. Therefore, the translation and the image are in an exemplification relationship.

From extension to exemplification, the translator used the pragmatic strategy of domestication. The ST clearly stated that the source of the water is the Yellow River, but in the TT, the translator translated it into all the water, omitting the background of the Yellow River. This kind of text processing makes the target readers not need to know the information that the Yellow River is the second largest river in China so that readers can read smoothly.



Picture 6

Translation example 6.

Source text: 悟空纵起筋斗云，来到灵山。只见这里灵峰叠嶂，宝刹庄严，钟磬悠长，诵经的声音朗朗不绝，一派佛家气象。

Target text: With a shout of "Go!" and one bound of his somersault cloud he was soon at Vulture Peak. Bringing down his auspicious cloud, he looked all around. Noble towers and pavilions were shining in the clouds. Bells and chimes were ringing and voices could be heard reciting holy sutras. It was a wonderful place.

As shown in Picture 6, the semantics expressed by images are related to the text. The ST vividly describes Ling Mountain from the perspective of vision and hearing, summarizing the Buddhist atmosphere. The images carefully depicted in the source text enrich the readers' spatial imagination, making the image and characteristics of Buddhism come alive on the paper. Therefore, the image and ST are in an enhancement relationship.

In the TT, the translator's description is more detailed than the ST, carefully portraying the sound of the Monkey King driving an auspicious cloud and the agility of his movements. However, the translator omitted the religious background of Buddhism and merely indicated that Ling Mountain is a wonderful place.

Therefore, from enhancement to exemplification, the translator used a pragmatic strategy of domestication. From the target reader's point of view, this reduces the barriers to understanding and makes translation straightforward.

5. Conclusion

Based on the theory of Image-text Relations Theory, through the analysis of the Chinese and English versions of the Monkey King series of picture books, this paper draws the following conclusions:

(1) The Image-text Relations Theory between the ST and TT has three relationships under the subsystem of logical semantics: exposition-exemplification, extension-enhancement, and extension-exemplification.

(2) The translator adopted different translation strategies when faced with the three different image-text relationships.

For the exposition-exemplification image-text relationship, the translator used a pragmatically enriched translation strategy to describe the characters in detail and plot; for the extension-enhancement image-text relationship, the translator adopted an

integrated and coherent translation strategy, not sticking to the structural consistency, but focusing on the logic of translation; for the extension-exemplification image-text relationship, the translator chose the method of domestication, which are close to the reading habits and expressions of the target readers.

The findings of this paper also have certain guiding significance for the translation of picture book translators. This paper may provide a new perspective for exploring the translation of children's picture books based on multimodal pragmatic theory. In addition, it provides corresponding strategies for the foreign translation of Chinese original picture books and looks forward to excellent translations of Chinese original picture books going abroad.

Through literature research, case analysis, and qualitative analysis, this paper reviews the previous research on multimodal theory and picture books and finally discusses three reasonable children's picture book translation strategies. However, due to the limited theories currently analyzing children's picture book translations, authors must support their views from different perspectives. Criticism of the example may be unjustified because it cannot be separated from the author's limited knowledge and personal judgment. When translating children's picture books using a multimodal pragmatic analysis framework, there is not enough space to comprehensively and thoroughly analyze the various types of language-visual relationships, which makes the conclusions less comprehensive. The discussion and analysis in this paper are somewhat subjective and do not think from the perspective of children, so in the future, I hope to increase corresponding empirical research. Considering the limitations of this paper, the author hopes that future research can focus on exploring more reasonable principles and theories of children's picture book translation strategies.

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On C-E Translation Strategies of Corporate Publicizing Video Based on Variational Translation Theory: A Communication Science Perspective

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Abstract

Corporate publicizing video has been widely used in international publicity and image building. Against this background, its translation quality becomes increasingly crucial. According to communication science theory, translation quality depends on whether a good communication effect can be achieved and a corporate image can be built. However, Chinese corporate publicizing video is characteristic of culture-loaded words, novel metaphors, and abstract expressions, which seriously interfere with the communication effect. To deal with these issues, the author combines communication science and variational translation theory to study the subtitle translation of Chinese corporate publicizing videos. It is found that noise and communication load control serve as standards for the translation of Chinese corporate publicizing videos, and they provide macro guidance for specific variational translation methods, including rewriting, adding, editing, and deletion, thus ensuring corporate publicizing videos meet the goal of publicity.

Key Words: Corporate Publicizing Video; Audio-visual Translation; Communication Science; Variational Translation Theory

1. Introduction

Recent years have seen the fast development of China’s foreign trade. According to *White Paper on Chinese Enterprises Going Global*, which was published by LinkedIn on November 29th, 2022, the globalization of Chinese enterprises has moved from “product internationalization” and “capital internationalization” to a new stage of “capability internationalization”. Against this background, the communication effect becomes increasingly crucial for companies to achieve the goal of “going out from China to the target market” to “going into the target market”.

To go into the target market, corporate publicizing video is a perfect choice. It serves as a window for customers to learn the information and values of the enterprise and it is usually published on businesses’ websites or distributed through their social media channels. Publicizing video is often used for international publicity, and to change the attitudes and thinking of the target audience (Bittner, 1986, p.50). In recent years, the translation quality of corporate publicizing videos has been greatly improved, but the problem of ignoring target-language culture, the needs of consumers, and being overly faithful to the original text still exists. Suitable translation facilitates communication, while bad translation causes barriers and even tarnishes the company’s image. As a result, its translation quality has a direct influence on economic benefits and it is urgent to study translation methods and standards for better corporate publicity effect.

When it comes to the translation of corporate publicizing videos, it is faced with a debate between complete translation and variational translation. In this study, the author combines communication science and variational translation theory, aiming to study the subtitle translation strategies of Chinese corporate publicizing videos.

2. Previous studies on the translation of corporate publicizing video

Based on its purpose, publicizing video can be divided mainly into corporate publicizing video, political publicizing video, travel publicizing video, city publicizing video, and educational publicizing video (Guo and Wu, 2011). Different from traditional written text, it is a type of film in which information can be transmitted through different modes. This information is purposefully selected to influence the cognition of the target audience. Multi-modal feature of corporate publicizing video is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, the same information can be transmitted through multiple channels, including pictures, sound, and text. Different modes cooperate to convey meaning, so the target consumer can receive more information

in a unit of time. On the other hand, how to restore the relationship between different modes of translation remains unsolved, presenting more challenges to the translator. If the subtitling translation can not be coordinated with other modes, it would fail to convey the original information and even confuse target consumers, influencing economic benefits.

The translation of corporate publicizing video falls into audio-visual translation, which originated in film translation, expanded into screen translation, and eventually matured into audiovisual translation (Liu, 2010). We are familiar with Jakobson's translation categories: intralingual translation, interlingual translation, and semiotic translation, on which multi-modal features are first shed light (Jakobson, 1959). However, audio-visual translation does not gain enough attention until Pérez-González (2014, p. 98) publishes *Audiovisual Translation: Theories, methods, and Issues: Routledge*, in which he points out that most of the audio-visual translation lacks research on the interaction between written words and visual information, namely resource integration. It is worth noting that resource integration among different modes is not easy due to different semiotic characteristics.

In the translation of the corporate publicizing video, the main research objective is the interlingual subtitle, which is the information presented in a film in a different language. It is usually in the form of one or more lines of text and is in sync with the original verbal information (Gottlieb, cited in Orero, 2004, p.86). The interlingual subtitle is usually placed at the bottom of the screen with limited space and time. For space constraints, both the subtitle and its transition should not occupy more than two lines or 35 characters (Baker, 2001, p. 245). As a result, subtitle translation must be concise and clear as much as possible. For time constraints, the length of subtitles should conform to people's normal reading time (Cintas and Anderman, 2009, p. 22). Subtitling translation is widely used in audio-visual communication such as film and television (Shuttleworth and Cowie, 2014, p. 161). It is a kind of "constrained translation", which means that audio-visual translation relies on the relationship between linguistic messages and information carried by non-linguistic systems (Mayoral, Kelly, and Gallardo, 1988, p. 356).

Recent years have seen scholars make tremendous achievements in quality control and translation methods of subtitling translation, such as condensation, reductive paraphrasing, and deletion (Li, 2001). Several theories have also been applied to solve translation difficulties concerned with subtitle features and cultural differences. But the application of variational translation theory to publicizing video is still an area that is largely ignored. The study of variation in linguistics mainly reveals the relationship between language variation and society (Lu and Zhang, 2020). In different societies, variation plays a significant role in good international publicity.

The corporate publicizing video has made an indelible contribution to helping Chinese products and culture enter overseas markets. However, Chinese audiovisual products have limited influence on the international stage. Through the literature review, it is found that the intervention and integration of different modes have gradually become a hot and difficult topic in subtitling translation, and the choice of complete translation and variational translation remains controversial.

3. Applicability of Communication Science and Variational Translation Theory to Publicizing Video Translation.

Variational translation theory mainly arises from Yan Fu's adaptation techniques in the translation of *Evolution and Ethics* (Huang and Chen, 2016). It is first put forward by Professor Huang Zhonglian, who claimed that variational translation theory is a kind of principle that help people understand the law and rules of the phenomena of variation in translation. (Huang, 2002a, p.32) Later on, Professor Huang (2002b) further put forward 7 specific translation techniques: adding, deleting, editing, narrating, condensing, integrating, and altering. Based on the above seven adaptations, eleven variational translation methods, including selected translation, edited translation, narrated translation, condensed translation, summarized translation, summarized trans-comment, trans-comment, altered translation, annotated translation, trans-writing, and cited translation are proposed (Huang, 2020, p.105)

The core of variational translation theory is "adaptation", which is to meet the specific needs of specific readers under specific conditions (Huang, 2002c). It is raised compared to complete translation in which the translator converts all information from the source language into the target language. The distinguishing criterion is whether the original text should be fully kept.

Variational translation theory is not a pure theory, but a pragmatic translation one. As a result, the scope of its application remains to be discussed (Wu, 2018). It has been proven effective in several translation topics, but little attention has been paid to its application in the translation of corporate publicizing videos. To meet this gap, this study will explore how variational translation theory serves as a guideline for the translation of corporate publicizing videos.

At the same time, good communication effect is the goal that variational translation should achieve. Communication science is established in the 1940s in the United States. In 1948, Lasswell (1948, p. 35) devised the famous 5W model of communication in *The Structure and Function of Communication in Society*, which is regarded as the founding work of communication, namely: 1)Who? 2)Says what? 3)In which channel? 4)To whom? 5)With what effect? In this model, the

effect of information is the top concern. Some scholars argue that the effect of information on people is like a gunshot to a target and that readers are passive receivers. Schramm, who is also one of the founders of communication science, does not agree with this idea and proposes that the effectiveness of mass media is determined by how they are used by the target audience (Wilbur Schramm, 1973, p. 196), that is, the effectiveness of the message depends on whether the content of the message meets the needs of the audience.

Communication science is closely linked to translation study. The purpose of communication science is to study human information dissemination, and translation is the tool of information transmission. Wolfram Wilss, a German translation theorist, argues that translation is a specific form of communication linked to linguistic acts and decisions, while the traditional linguistic theory ignores the communicative nature of translation (Wills, 2001, pp. 13-14).

The communication effect is crucial for companies' development. And this paper is designed to probe variational translation strategies of corporate publicizing video from the perspective of communication science. It helps translators consider translation as an intercultural communication activity. Translation is the tool, and publicity is the goal, as a result, translation should meet the goal of publicity. However, in most cases, translators only translate information but do not publicize corporate values in the translation practice, thus confusing the target audience.

According to communication science, noise control, and communication load are priorities in the translation process.

3.1 Noise control:

In communication science, the information does not reach the audience completely after it is sent out from the information source due to the influence of various factors. These factors are collectively called "noise". It can be divided into linguistic, cultural, and psychological noise in the translation process. Strange expressions, redundant structures, and illogical sentences can lead to noise interfering with the understanding of target consumers. In this study, noise can not only arise from subtitles but also from other modes, such as visual and aural modes.

3.2 Communication load control

In this study, communication load refers to the amount of information contained in unit words. It is worth noting that communication load is not measured by the number of words, but the amount of information carried by words. It is a crucial indicator that we can take into account when we choose different variational translation methods. For example, metaphor and culture-loaded words are short but rich in information, and their huge amount of information often causes "communication overload".

In this study, communication science and variational translation theory are combined to build the following translation model for corporate publicizing video.

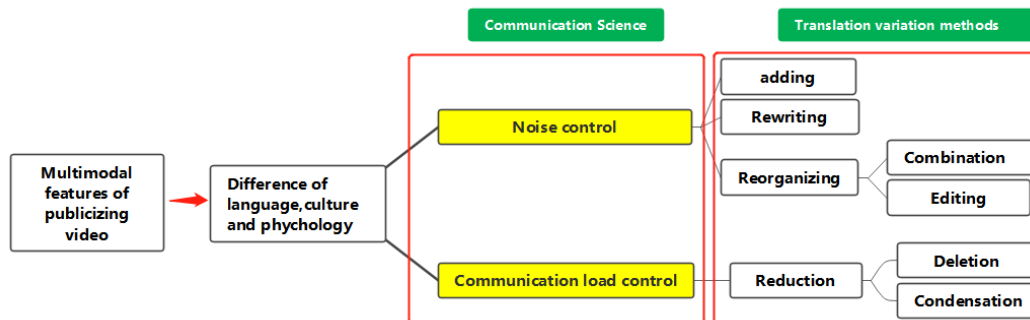


Table 1: An Integrated translation model of corporate publicizing video

According to this model, noise control and communication load control are goals of specific translation methods that are based on variational translation theory. The combination of communication science and variational translation theory provides invaluable insight into the translation of corporate publicizing videos.

4. Translation strategies for translating corporate publicizing video

Influenced by Chinese culture, some expressions in corporate publicizing videos are implicit and vague with many hidden meanings. These issues are demonstrated mainly in the following aspects:

- (1) Hyperbole and abstract expressions are often used in corporate publicizing videos, leading to semantic ambiguity.
- (2) The frequent use of metaphors leads to the absence or even conflict of connotative meaning.
- (3) Culture-loaded words create barriers to understanding
- (4) Industrial terminology and concept are not fully explained

Aiming at the above four translation issues, this study examines the guiding role of variational translation theory for corporate publicizing video translation.

4.1 Rewriting

Rewriting is a flexible combination of translating and writing. It refers to changing the form, and style of the original information to a more acquainted and acceptable one for target consumers. That's how we can meet the specific needs of specific consumers and make the translation conform to the reading habits of foreign consumers.

It is often difficult for English consumers to understand some unique Chinese expressions, and they may even be misunderstood. Rewriting them can help readers easily obtain information.

Example 1

Source text: 生在八步沙的郭翊，小时候见过妖怪，黑风黄沙把人捉走，爷爷告诉他，种树就能治妖怪。后来驴子交给郭翊的父亲，迎来日出送走晚霞，到了这一代，郭翊不想牵驴。他想走的路不一样。郭翊的 flag 立起来，赶新潮的村民也越来越多。郭和他的队伍走在大会上，热气腾腾。八步沙地风吹过来，没有沙子打脸（00：20）

——蚂蚁集团¹

Target Text : Guo Yi, born in Babusha, believes that he saw monsters when he was growing up. He saw dark winds and yellow sandstorms take people away. Guo's grandpa told him that the monsters can be tamed by planting trees. As per tradition, Guo's dad took over herding the family's donkeys, but Guo Yi is not keen to herd the animals when his turn comes. He wants to do something different. Guo put something new up in the fields, which attracted villagers near and far. Guo and his team are marching towards their goal, with great zeal. The wind is still blowing in Babusha, but people do not feel the sand against their faces anymore.

——Ant Group

This case is selected from the publicizing video of *Ant Group: Sowing*. Since the project began in 2016, it has achieved good fruits and brought a great reputation to Ant Group, and it has been praised by the United Nations.



Picture 1

In this case, there are some tricky problems. The first issue is the translation of “donkey”. Donkey is an important means of transportation for Chinese farmers, helping to haul saplings in the process of planting trees, but modern target audiences may not have this kind of experience, as a result, most of them can not realize that the donkey’s role is to help transport saplings. Based on the function of its role, it can be deduced that Guo Yi’s father is given the task of planting trees when the donkey is given to his father. Guo Yi does not want to herd the donkey means that he does not want to plant trees traditionally. The

¹ Website:

<https://www.antgroup.com/news-media/media-library?type=%E5%AE%A3%E4%BC%A0%E7%89%87>

donkey's message is too subtle and complex, causing great noise to the understanding of target consumers. As a result, it has to be rewritten.

The second issue is the understanding of “flag”. In this video, its translation is “he wants to do something different”, but what is the new thing? There is no clue in this video, as a result, it may confuse the target audience. Based on visual information (Picture 1), it can be found that the flag standing up is a camera. Ant Group is an internet enterprise, and it introduces a new model of planting virtual trees via mobile phone. As a result, the flag can be translated as “apply internet planting model to the desert”. Rewriting enables connotation to be explicit, thus reducing communication load.



Picture 2

The next translation issue comes from the understanding of “郭和他的队伍走在大路上，热气腾腾”。According to visual information (Picture 2), the dust comes from the process of planting trees, and it is just like the steam from cooking. The more efforts are made, the faster and thicker the dust is raised. As a result, it can be concluded that “热气腾腾” means people are planting trees with great zeal. A better translation version is “in high spirits”. It has the same meaning and conforms to the movement of dust from the ground to the sky.

Based on the above analysis, it is suggested to modify the translation version as follows:

Suggested translation : Guo Yi, born in Babusha, believes that he saw monsters when he was growing up. He saw dark winds and yellow sandstorms take people away. Guo's grandpa told him that the monsters can be tamed by planting trees. ***Guo's dad shoulders the responsibility for planting trees, but Guo Yi is not keen to plant trees traditionally when his turn comes.*** He wants to do something different. ***Instead, Guo applies an internet planting model to the desert, which attracted villagers near and far.*** Guo and his team are marching towards their goal of preventing sandstorms, in high spirits. The wind is still blowing in Babusha, but people do not feel the sand against their faces anymore.

4.2 Deletion

Deletion means to omit redundant information as a way to highlight important information. Due to the difference in ideology, some political information will lead to misunderstanding. The slow development of audiovisual translation research is not only caused by technical limitations but is also subject to strict scrutiny of political systems. Its constraints are much greater than those of traditional texts because audiovisual materials convey more obscure messages. Massidda (2015) is a pioneer who studies censorship in audiovisual translation, especially the influence of political correctness on translation. She claims that videos with incorrect political orientation have little chance to complete the whole process of information dissemination. As a result, the information involved in political issues must be deleted in translation.

Example 2

Source Text: 公司汇集数位国家千人计划专家，实施全球战略布局 (03:02)

——北微传感²

Target Text: We bring several experts from National Thousand Talent Plan to implement a global strategic layout.

——Bewis Sensing

The "National Thousand Talents Plan", or the Overseas High-Level Talents Admission Program, is organized by China in December 2008, and it aims to introduce high-level talents studying and working overseas. However, the U.S. government has repeatedly and systematically prosecuted experts and scholars participating in the "National Thousand Talents Plan" on the grounds of obstructing national security since 2018. As a result, most of the common Westerners believe that the companies which are involved in this plan are illegal companies seeking to steal critical science and technology. Against this

² Website: <https://www.bwsensing.com/aboutus.html>

background, the "National Thousand Talents Plan" is still translated in the company's publicity video in 2023. It may lead to the intervention of the U.S. government and cause adverse effects on the company's business.

According to communication science, the translator acts as a "gatekeeper", and he would filter some content in the process of information encoding (Lewin, 1947, p. 145). Translators are part of social networks and gatekeeping behavior is also governed by social factors and subject to specific "social standards" (Duan, 2006, p. 143). In the translation process, a translator needs to fully understand the original message and translate it according to the expected publicity effect. The target audience of the corporate publicizing video is English-speaking consumers, so it needs to conform to their specific social standards. In this case, the translator ignored the social constraints of the "National Thousand Talents Plan", which was suppressed by the Western countries, thus causing serious political issues.

4.3 Editing

Editing is the process of editing original work and then translating it. It adjusts the structure and sequence of the original work according to the thinking habits of the target audience. It is also used to extract the required information due to the pervasive existence of hyperbole, metaphor, and abstract expressions in corporate publicizing videos because they often lead to semantic ambiguity, so the translator should determine the relevance of the information to the recipient.

Example 3

Source Text: 穿过葱茏的小径，把大自然的生命气息带回家，走过爱的四季，从一方天地，连接万千世界。让你的家和大地馈赠融为一体，给你以健康快乐的许诺（00:31）
——海尔3

Target Text: Through the verdant path, bring the breath of nature back to your home. Through the four seasons of love, connects the whole world from a tiny corner. Make your home one with the gifts of the earth, and give you a promise of health and happiness.

——Haier



Picture 3

Aesthetics is significant for Chinese corporate publicizing videos, so several rhetorics are used. However, information and facts are emphasized in English-speaking countries. In this case, some Chinese expressions are confusing, including "Make your home be one with the gifts of the earth, give you a promise of health and happiness." What's the meaning of the gift of the earth? How can your home be integrated with the gift of the earth? It does not conform to facts and logic in English.

According to visual information (Picture 3), the fresh fruit tree is put into the refrigerator. At the same time, it is well-known that one of the main products of Haier is the refrigerator, which is used to keep food fresh. As a result, it can be deduced that "the gift of the earth" in this video means fruit. "Only keep these fruit fresh, can we be healthy" is a logical sentence.

Based on the above analysis, the Chinese subtitle is edited as follows: "穿过葱茏的小径，把大自然的生命气息带回家，走过爱的四季，从一方天地，连接万千世界。让新鲜果蔬住进你的家，给你以健康快乐的许诺。" And then we can deliver a better translation version based on the above edited Chinese subtitle: "***Through the verdant path, bring the breath***

of nature back to your home. Through the four seasons of love, connect the whole world from a tiny corner. Make your home full of fresh fruits and vegetables, guaranteeing your health and happiness.”

4.4 Adding

Adding means putting some explanatory words in translation when there is a cultural default, such as the addition of culture-loaded words, which are widely used in Chinese corporate publicizing videos. While conveying corporate values, these culture-loaded words present a great obstacle to target consumers, thus destroying the effect of communication. To deal with this problem, information supplementation serves as a good solution.

Example 4

Source Text: 从南巡讲话中的创业梦想而生，向一带一路的国际化方向嬗变。与时代同行的森源电气推动着中国，乃至世界电气制造行业的变革，展现出“大电气”发展思路，同步国家战略的精彩与神韵（00:12）
——森源电气⁴

Target Text: Beginning with the *South Inspection Speech* and heading to the Belt and Road world stage. Advancing with the times, Senyuan Electric pushes forward the revolution of electric manufacturing in China and even the world. The "Great Electric" development idea is always keeping pace with the national strategy.

——Henan Senyuan Group Co., Ltd

In this case, “South Inspection Speech” refers to the historical event that Deng Xiaoping visited Wuchang, Shenzhen, Zhuhai, and Shanghai in early 1992. During this tour, Deng put forward some new viewpoints on a series of crucial issues, such as the core of Marxism, and the essence of socialism. These significant speeches promote China’s reform and opening up.

Since then, private companies have sprung up in China, including Senyuan Electric. However, due to the lack of necessary cultural background, most of the target audiences are unable to tell the connection between “South Inspection Speech” and Senyuan Electric. As a result, this historical event becomes noise interfering with the information-decoding process.

To eliminate noise brought by culture-loaded words, more information is needed in translation. Since Deng Xiaoping is the hero of the “South Inspection Speech”, and is well-known as the chief architect of China's reform and opening up, which promotes the development of Senyuan Electric, the speaker's name should be added. Apart from that, it happens in 1992, the time of major historical events should also be noted. Based on the above analysis, the suggested translation is *“Beginning with the speech made by Deng Xiaoping in 1992”*.

5. Conclusion

This study provides a comprehensive and in-depth discussion on translation methods for corporate publicizing video, thus helping facilitate overseas communication. Corporate publicizing video is a great way for businesses that want to reach more people to show off their products or services creatively and interestingly. As a result, the methods of adaptation and translation will lay a solid foundation for future publicizing video translation.

Based on variational translation theory, the author proposes different variation methods from the perspective of communication science, including adding, rewriting, editing, and deletion. It’s recommended that abstract information should be edited before translation. What’s more, an addition should be adopted in the translation of culture-loaded words.

In this study, communication science provides a macro translation framework, while specific translation methods are summarized from variational translation theory. Based on the integrated translation model of corporate publicizing video, the adaptation and integration of original information which is hidden in diverse modes will be achieved, thus helping build better communication effects for companies that want to occupy more overseas market share.

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⁴ Website: <https://haokan.baidu.com/v?vid=6338075396034373152>

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Localization and Cultural Adaptation of Museum Websites: A Case of the Chinese Website of The British Museum

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Abstract

This paper examines the approach to localizing a high-level website through cultural adaptation, focusing on the six elements of cultural adaptation in web localization: spatial orientations, navigation modes, translation equivalence, country-specific symbols, icons, and color symbolism. Using the 10 most-searched Chinese museum websites as reference objects, the paper analyses the level of cultural adaptation in the Chinese website of The British Museum and provides suggestions to increase its localization level, including the use of sticky sidebars, icons plus textual descriptions, and bright colors. The paper highlights the importance of understanding cultural differences in website design and the potential impact on user experience. Overall, the paper offers insights and practical recommendations for web localization practitioners to effectively adapt websites to different cultures.

Key Words: Localization, cultural adaptation, museum website, The British Museum

1. Introduction

The museum has been an integral part of human civilization throughout history. It serves as an organizational entity and physical space that collects, conserves, and displays tangible and intangible evidence of human history and nature. In addition to preserving cultural heritage, museums have evolved into essential educational and touristic hubs. Defining the concept of a museum has been a subject of debate among institutions and scholars, with the International Council of Museums (2022) providing an up-to-date and comprehensive definition:

A museum is a not-for-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage. Open to the public, accessible and inclusive, museums foster diversity and sustainability. They operate and communicate ethically, professionally and with the participation of communities, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection and knowledge sharing. (p. 3)

This definition emphasizes one mission of a museum: serving the public. A museum serves as a custodian of heritage, preserving and interpreting it for future generations, promoting cultural understanding and awareness, and contributing to the development of identity and memory.

However, due to constraints of time and space, serving all audiences becomes an impossible mission for traditional museums. Most traditional museums have been limited in their capacity to provide services. These limitations manifest in the form of geographical barriers, physical access constraints, and overcrowding. Not all individuals can travel to a museum location, and the limited capacity to receive visitors may discourage attendance. These challenges pose significant obstacles to the mission of traditional brick-and-mortar museums as non-profit and public good institutions, which aim to serve the entire population.

In recent years, museums have increasingly turned to alternative ways to reach wider audiences. Online exhibits, virtual tours, and digital platforms have emerged as popular approaches, extending the accessibility of museums beyond physical space and time. While acknowledging that online museum visiting cannot substitute the experience of in-person visit, it extends the accessibility of a museum. As a result, the museum website has drawn significant academic attention, with researchers highlighting the positive impacts of museum websites on audience engagement and education (Mateo, 2021; Cook, 2007). Furthermore, scholars have explored the effectiveness, usability, and design of museum websites (Wu and Liu, 2021; Cristobal-Fransi et al., 2021; Kabassi, 2019). However, despite the growing number of multilingual museum websites, little research has focused on the localization of museum websites, which involves adapting website content and format to meet the linguistic, cultural, and functional requirements of different regions or target audiences. Specifically, the principles of museum website localization and the standards for localized websites remain under-researched.

In contrast to building a website from scratch, website localization entails “the adaptation of digital content on the web and through mobile applications or software applications to meet the cultural, linguistic, legal, and other requirements of a target market where it will be deployed” (Benmamoun et al., 2021, p. 216). A localized website is based on an established website and, technically and culturally, adapts itself to the target community. Localizing a website is not merely a matter of translating its content into another language. Rather, a localized website must be customized to the unique needs and preferences of the

target audience, taking into account factors such as cultural norms, user preferences, and technical requirements. This may involve adjusting the content, format, and structure of the website to better suit the needs of the target audience.

The aim of this paper is to investigate the cultural issues that arise in the localization of museum websites, with a specific focus on cultural adaptations to web content and format. Using the Chinese website of The British Museum (referred to as TBM), this paper seeks to answer two key questions: 1) how is cultural adaptation manifested on localized museum websites? And 2) what strategies should be employed in the web localization of museum websites to achieve effective cultural adaptation?

By addressing these questions, this research aims to contribute to the understanding of cultural considerations in the localization of museum websites and provide insights into effective strategies for achieving cultural adaptation. The findings of this study can inform museum professionals and website designers in their efforts to enhance the accessibility and engagement of diverse audiences in the digital realm.

2. Methods

This study adopts a comparative analysis method to examine the cultural adaptation of TBM's Chinese website. Specifically, the Chinese website of TBM is compared with other successful Chinese museum websites and the English version of TBM. The top 10 most-searched Chinese museum websites, as identified by the Chinese Museum Trending Searches (CMTS), are used as the benchmark for successful cultural integration.

Table 1. Top 10 most-searched Chinese museum websites.

Names	Abbr.	URLs
故宫博物院 [THE PALACE MUSEUM]	TPM	https://www.dpm.org.cn
中国国家博物馆 [NATIONAL MUSEUM OF CHINA]	NMC	http://www.chnmuseum.cn
吴文化博物馆 [MUSEUM OF WU]	MW	https://www.wuzhongmuseum.com
广东省博物馆 [GUANGDONG MUSEUM]	GM	https://www.gdmuseum.com
湖南省博物馆 [HUNAN MUSEUM]	HM	http://www.hnmuseum.com
河南博物院 [HENAN MUSEUM]	HNM	http://www.chnmus.net
成都博物馆 [CHENGDU MUSEUM]	CM	https://www.cdmuseum.com
苏州博物馆 [SUZHOU MUSEUM]	SM	https://www.szmuseum.com
浙江省博物馆 [ZHEJIANG PROVINCIAL MUSEUM]	ZPM	https://www.zhejiangmuseum.com
洛阳博物馆 [LUOYANG MUSEUM]	LM	http://www.lymuseum.com/

The top 10 most-searched Chinese museum websites can be considered culturally-customized websites that have achieved the highest level of localization within the Chinese cultural context, despite not being explicitly localized. These websites successfully meet the expectations and preferences of Chinese web users for museum websites. By conducting a comparative analysis between TBM's Chinese website and these benchmark websites, this study aims to identify and evaluate the cultural adaptations present in the web content and format of TBM's Chinese website. The findings will shed light on effective strategies for achieving cultural adaptation in the localization of museum websites, particularly within the Chinese cultural context.

3. Localization Level and Cultural Adaptation

3.1 Localization Level

Localization level describes the extent to which a website adapts itself to the target culture and users. In commercial contexts, the decision on the level of localization often depends on Return on Investment (ROI) considerations. In essence, if the localized website is expected to generate greater benefits, more resources will be allocated by the localization commissioner to create a higher-level localized website (Yunker, 2003; Brooks, 2000). The categorization of localization levels varies widely depending on different criteria. Based on the degree of cultural adaptation, Singh and Pereira (2005) propose five categories of web localization levels:

1. Standardized websites: having the same web content for all users. There are no efforts made to create customized websites.
2. Semi-localized websites: providing contact information about local branches. Little else customized information is offered to address the needs of international users.
3. Localized websites: offering country-specific web pages with translation, but the functions and structures are not customized.
4. Highly localized websites: offering all content and site structure/functions fully adapted to the target users.
5. Culturally customized websites: totally immersed in the target culture and society. (pp. 10-15)

Different localization levels require varying degrees of re-engineering and re-structuring. To achieve a high-level localized website, not only the textual and visual information, but also the underlying program and coding should be adjusted and even recreated to customize itself to the target users. However, Singh and Pereira (2005) point out that only a limited number of websites are fully customized to the highest level, primarily due to time and cost constraints as well as the finite capacity of localizers. Thus, while high-level localization is desirable, practical considerations often limit the level of adaptation achievable in real-world localization projects.

Although Singh and Pereira's categorization offers a valuable framework for understanding various levels of localization, it fails to encompass all potential cases. One such case involves organizations that selectively localize certain web pages, while leaving others unlocalized and linking the localized and unlocalized pages through hyperlinks. This phenomenon is frequently observed in non-commercial organizations due to limited localization resources (Jiménez-Crespo, 2013, p. 35). This form of localization may be categorized as a "hybrid level", where a website comprises pages with varying localization levels.

3.2 Cultural Adaptation

The role of culture and cultural adaptation in localization has been widely acknowledged by scholars in both the localization industry and Translation Studies (Esselink, 2001; Katan, 2009). The purpose of cultural adaptation in localization is not "to trick users into thinking your company is local, but to let users know that you understand their specific needs and wants" (Yunker, 2003, p. 18). A well-localized website should fully immerse itself in the target culture to achieve this purpose. In general, a website with a higher localization level requires more cultural adaptations, which results in lower cognitive burden, more effective interaction, and greater acceptance from target users (Jiménez-Crespo, 2013, p. 32). These adaptations, as outlined by Singh and Pereira (2005), contribute to the establishment of perception, symbolism, and behavior among the target web users:

1. Perception: the process by which individuals select, filter, organize, and interpret information to create a meaningful picture of the world;
2. Symbolism: the system of representations and symbols carrying cultural information.
3. Behavior: individual's actions and aspirations guided by cultural values.

In the context of web localization, the aforementioned three factors impact the website design and influence web users' motivations and decisions. However, since this study focuses on the website itself rather than the web users, only the implications of perception and symbolism for localized websites will be discussed. Implications of perception and symbolism for localized websites include:

Perception:

1. Spatial Orientation
2. Navigation Modes
3. Translation Equivalence

Symbolism:

1. Country-Specific Symbols
2. Icons
3. Color Symbols

These six elements encompass both web content and format, reflecting user's expectations of a website in a specific cultural context. By analyzing the characteristics of the top 10 most-searched websites with regards to the six elements outlined, a reference framework for the highest-level web localization can be developed. This framework will be used to evaluate the localization of TBM's Chinese website and identify areas where improvements could be made.

4. Findings

4.1 Perception

4.1.1 Spatial Orientation

Spatial orientation refers to the organization of content on a website, which directly influences the visual perception of web users (Barber and Badre, 1998). The location of the main content can impact the user's perception of a website's visual appeal, with English-speaking users often preferring a left-side emphasis layout due to the left-to right reading direction of English. Additionally, web users familiar with symmetrical web structures may prefer to find information on the central part of the screen. Website layouts can generally be categorized into three types: a) left emphasis layout, with the main content appearing on the left side; b) right emphasis layout, with the main content appearing on the right side; and c) symmetrical layout, in which both left and right sides are emphasized. These layouts can be applied in website design solely or together.

Table 2. The homepage layouts of the 10 sampled Chinese museum websites.

Museum	Web Layout
TPM	Symmetrical
NMC	Right emphasis; Symmetrical
MW	Symmetrical
GM	Symmetrical
HM	Right emphasis; Symmetrical
HNM	Left emphasis
CM	Symmetrical
SM	Symmetrical
ZPM	Symmetrical
LM	Symmetrical

It is noteworthy that the symmetrical layout stands out as the predominant choice of the homepage layout among the sampled Chinese museum websites, accounting for 90 per cent of the cases. This layout type is, therefore, considered a visual convention for Chinese web users, who have a preconceived notion of how a museum website's homepage should be structured.

Nielsen and Tahir (2001) posit that users arrive at a new web's homepage with a considerable amount of mental baggage accumulated from prior visits to other homepages. As a result, users have formed a generic mental model of how a homepage should function. Hence, when a Chinese web user clicks on the Chinese website of TBM, they expect to encounter a website resembling other museum websites in China, that is to say, a website with a symmetrical layout in terms of spatial orientation.

The Chinese website of TBM adheres to the visual convention of symmetrical layout, which is prevalent in the homepage designs of Chinese museum websites. The comparison between the Chinese and English versions of the TBM website (Illustration 1 and 2) reveals that the spatial orientation of the homepage is unchanged in the Chinese version. Despite several adjustments in textual and visual content, the symmetrical structure of the homepage is retained, which is consistent with the expectations of Chinese web users.

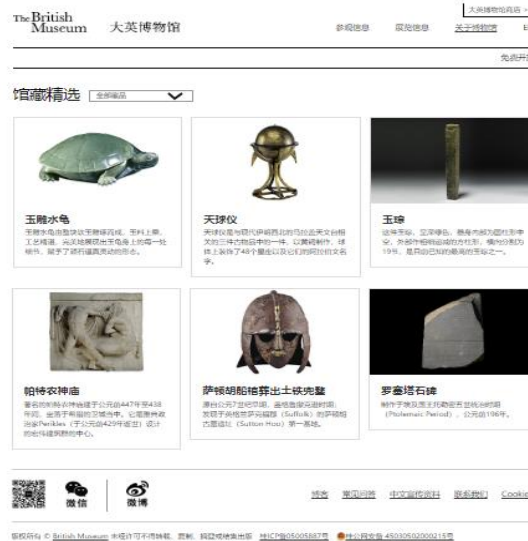


Illustration 1 Chinese Homepage of TBM

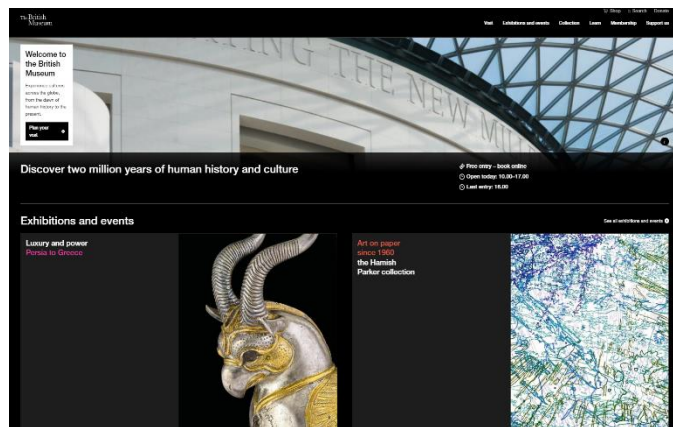


Illustration 2 English Homepage of TBM

4.1.2 Navigation Modes

Navigation modes refer to the way in which web navigation is structured, including the placement, tags, and functions of navigation. In essence, web navigation acts as a road map for users. It is the table of contents of a website, which guides users throughout their exploration of the site. There are four different navigation approaches, as identified by WebsiteBuilderExpert (WBE):

1. Mega drop downs: large menu panels dropping down from the global menu header at the top of the website.
2. Footer menus: appearing at the foot of the web page, offering additional content and links.
3. Sidebars: appearing at the side of the web page and running horizontally alongside the content.
4. Breadcrumbs: hierarchical links showing sub-categorized pages.
5. Sticky navigation: staying fixed to the top of the page, not disappearing when a user scrolls down the page.

Some approaches in the WBE classification have overlapping characteristics. For instance, sticky navigation can be found at the top, side, or bottom of a web page, and can be classified as mega drop downs, footer menus, or sidebars, respectively. In this regard, the position and the stickiness/non-stickiness of navigations will be investigated separately in this paper.

Table 3. Navigation position and stickiness of 10 sampled Chinese museum websites

Museum Name	Navigation Position	Navigation Stickiness
TPM	Top; Side	Yes (Side)
NMC	Top; Side	Yes (Side)
MW	Top; Foot	Yes (Top)
GM	Top; Foot	No
HM	Top; Foot	No
HNM	Top	No
CM	Side; Foot	Yes (Side)
SM	Top; Side	Yes (Top; Side)
ZPM	Top; Side; Foot	Yes (Side)
LM	Top; Foot	No

Table 3 shows that 90 per cent of the sampled websites place their navigation at the top of the web page, while 60 per cent use sticky navigation. Additionally, 80 per cent of them apply two types of navigation. Notably, sticky navigation is often located on the side of the web page.

The Chinese version of TBM's website exemplifies a straightforward navigation design located at the top of the web page, as depicted in Illustration 3. In comparison to the English version's navigation (Illustration 4), the Chinese version has simplified both its functions and items. For example, the "Search" and "Donate" buttons present in the English navigation are absent in the Chinese version. While the "Shop" button is left, its web is not localized. Instead, the Chinese website of TBM employs a third-party e-commerce platform to fulfill this function. Clicking on the "The British Museum Shop" button in the Chinese navigation redirects users to TMall, China's largest e-commerce platform. According to Wang and Li (2022), the platform model of e-commerce is the dominant approach in Chinese market, with a growing number of consumers preferring to make purchases on third-party platforms rather than self-operated business websites. As a result, outsourcing to a third-party shop rather than operating a localized business website aligns with Chinese consumer habits and offers operational and logistical cost reductions.



Illustration 2 Chinese Navigation of TBM

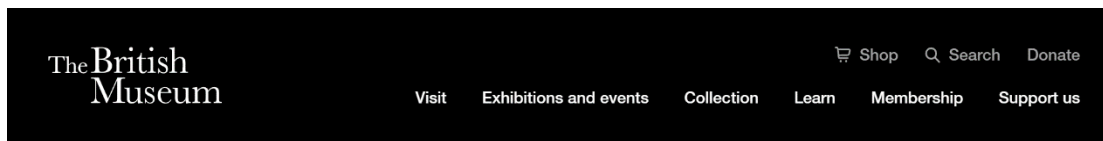


Illustration 1 English Navigation of TBM

The existing navigation design on the Chinese website of TBM is effective in serving its basic functions, despite being simplified. However, to achieve a higher level of localization and adaptation, it may be beneficial to incorporate a sticky sidebar that can offer additional information and features, such as contact details and search functionality. This could enhance the user experience by granting easy access to essential information and tools, while also aligning with the conventions of Chinese web design.

4.1.3 Translation equivalence

The translation of a website necessitates careful consideration to ensure the preservation of equivalence between two languages. Website translation here refers to the transformation of linguistic codes, and as such, adaptations are required in word processing to ensure that the message conveyed in the source language is accurately reflected in the target language. In the case of the Chinese-English language pair, for example, adjustments to the date format are often required for English-Chinese translation due to the different writing habits of the two languages. The Chinese date format is typically expressed as “year-month-day”, whereas the common order in English is “day-month-year” or “month-day-year”. To address this disparity, all dates on the Chinese website of TBM are adapted to the Chinese format. Similarly, time, currency, and other measurement units on the Chinese website adhere to the Chinese writing system. These adaptations are implemented to ensure that Chinese web users can easily comprehend the information presented on the website, thereby reducing their cognitive load in reading it.

Another notable difference between English and Chinese lies in entropy, a statistical parameter that measures the amount of information generated on average for each letter of a text in a given language. In general, Chinese characters carry more information and occupy less space than English words (Chen et al., 2017). Consequently, when translating all textual content on a website from English to Chinese, the resulting Chinese text occupies less space on the website, leading to a more scattered presentation of information on the website. To compensate for this, various approaches are commonly employed, including the addition of textual and image-based content. On TBM’s Chinese website, this compensation strategy primarily involves the augmentation of textual content rather than images. For instance, the description of the collection “Indian terrapin (Kachuga dhongaka)” on the English website of TBM contains 307 words, while the corresponding description on the Chinese website contains 816 characters. However, the Chinese website only includes one picture of the collection, compared to 15 on the English version.

By incorporating additional textual content, the Chinese website seeks to mitigate the space disparity resulting from translation and provide Chinese users with a comprehensive understanding of the exhibit. However, it is important to acknowledge that the divergent approaches to textual and visual presentation between the English and Chinese versions may affect the overall user experience and perception of the website’s content. With a greater number of images depicting the exhibit on the English website, users of the English version have a more direct and visually-oriented experience. In contrast, Chinese users gain access to more extensive background information about the exhibit due to the increased amount of textual content on the Chinese website. The disparity in presentation between the two language versions implies that the user experience and the way in which information is conveyed may differ based on the users’ preferred habits in receiving information. English users may rely more heavily on visual elements to grasp the essence of the exhibit, while Chinese users have access to a more detailed textual narrative that provides them with a deeper understanding of the exhibit’s cultural and historical significance. Consequently, the website’s design and content adaptation reflect the cultural and linguistic preferences of the respective target audiences, thereby catering to their specific information consumption habits.

4.2 Symbolism

4.2.1 Country-Specific Symbols

Country-specific symbols refer to elements that represent a way of life or embody specific cultural values. These symbols hold particular meanings or connotations within different countries or cultures. For example, in Chinese culture, the hui-shaped pattern (resembling the Chinese character “回”) serves as a symbol associated with tradition, wealth, luck and endlessness, which is commonly employed in the design of furniture, buildings and clothing. In the context of web design, such country- and cultural- specific symbols are usually utilized as decorative elements. Among the 10 sampled Chinese museum websites, only two of them incorporate country- and culture-specific symbols. The website of NMC features the hui-shaped pattern and the website of TPM employs flower-shaped and fish-shaped symbols as decoration for web buttons. All of these symbols carry connotations of wealth and luck. Conversely, the remaining eight sampled websites do not include country-specific symbols on their pages, suggesting that their presence may not be considered necessary. The Chinese website of TBM, meanwhile, do not apply country-specific symbols as well.

While country-specific symbols can add cultural significance and visual appeal to a website, their absence does not necessarily diminish a website’s effectiveness. In the case of Chinese museum websites, the limited use of country-specific symbols suggests that they may not be deemed essential for the design of a museum website in China. However, the decision to include or exclude such symbols ultimately depends on the goals and target audience of the website. For example, if a museum website aims to attract tourists or visitors from specific countries, incorporating country-specific symbols may be more suitable and effective. Similarly, if a website aims to showcase a particular facet of a country’s culture, the inclusion of relevant symbols may be beneficial. The consideration of country-specific symbols should align with the specific objectives and target audience of the website in question.

4.2.2 Icons

Icon serves as visual symbols that refers to links, options, or functions within a website. Their role in web design is crucial as they facilitate easier and more efficient navigation for users. Icons provide visual cues that can be readily recognized and understood, transcending language and cultural barriers. With the aid of icons, web users can obtain information speedily without language-related obstacles. It is therefore important to select icons that are culturally appropriate and easily understandable by the website’s target audience. When analyzing the icons of a website, it is crucial to determine whether they are understood within a specific culture. For example, if a website uses Chinese characters as icons, they may be not understandable for British users. Additionally, icons should be used in conjunction with clear textual descriptions to ensure users grasp their intended purpose. This approach creates a seamless user experience, reduces cognitive load and enhances user engagement.

Table 4. How icons are applied on the 10 sampled websites.

Museum Name	How Icons Applied
TPM	Icons + Textual Description
NMC	Icons + Textual Description
MW	Icons
GM	Icons + Textual Description
HM	Icons + Textual Description
HNM	Icons + Textual Description
CM	No Icons
SM	Icons + Textual Description
ZPM	Icons + Textual Description
LM	No Icons

Table 4 demonstrates that the majority of websites employ a combination of icons and textual descriptions. This icon usage pattern enables users to quickly navigate to desired pages and functions, minimizing misunderstandings. However, no icons are present on the Chinese website of TBM, even though its English version applies this pattern (Illustration 5). Therefore, to achieve a higher level localization, it is recommended that the Chinese website of TBM also incorporate icons with textual descriptions to provide users with clearer guidance and enhance their overall experience.



Illustration 3 Icons on the English Website of TBM

4.2.3 Color Symbolism

The selection of colors in web design can be influenced by cultural factors as colors carry different meanings and connotations across cultures. When localizing a website, careful consideration is needed in choosing a standard color, which refers to the main color used for the web logo, icons, navigation, and background, as it represents the website’s image. It is important to be culturally sensitive to ensure that the chosen color aligns with the target audience’s cultural understanding.

Table 5. Standard colors of the 10 sampled websites.

Museum Name	Standard Colors
TPM	Red
NMC	Red
MW	Black
GM	Red
HM	White
HNM	Red

CM	White
SM	White
ZPM	White
LM	Yellow

The analysis of standard colors used on Chinese museum websites reveals that white and red are the most commonly chosen options; similarly, the Chinese website of TBM also adopts white as its standard color, deviating from the black used in the English version. However, it is worth mentioning that many Chinese museum websites incorporate additional bright colors alongside their standard color. For example, the website of the Hunan Museum uses red and yellow, while The Palace Museum employs blue and yellow. These additional colors prevent the websites from appearing monotonous and enhance their visual appeal. In contrast, the Chinese website of TBM predominantly utilizes white, which can make the website appear tedious and unchanging. Therefore, to achieve a higher-level localization, it is suggested to incorporate other colors such as red and yellow, which are commonly seen on Chinese museum websites, into the design of the Chinese website of TBM. This would add vibrancy and align with the cultural preferences of Chinese web users.

5. Conclusion

This paper has investigated the approach to localizing a high-level website through cultural adaptation, by analyzing six key elements of cultural adaptation in web localization, namely spatial orientations, navigation modes, translation equivalence, country-specific symbols, icons, and color symbolism. In line with this objective, the study has drawn upon the CMTS and analyzed the top 10 most-searched Chinese museum websites, which are considered as culturally customized for Chinese users, to identify effective localization strategies. Specifically, the paper argues that a successful high-level localized website should align with the expectations of target users and existing websites designed for the local audience should serve as a norm for localization efforts. Through a comparative analysis of the Chinese website of TBM with the 10 sampled websites, this paper finds that the former has adopted some cultural adaptations in web localization, such as a symmetrical layout, the use of the Chinese writing system, and the application of white as the standard color. The paper also provides some recommendations for increasing the localization level of museum websites, including incorporating sticky sidebars, using icons with textual descriptions, and adding bright colors, all of which aim to enhance user engagement and satisfaction. These suggestions can be used as guidelines for web designers and developers seeking to create culturally customized websites that meet the needs and expectations for users in a specific cultural context. By considering the six key elements of cultural adaptation, museum web designers can create websites that effectively communicate with the target audience and provide an optimal user experience.

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