

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

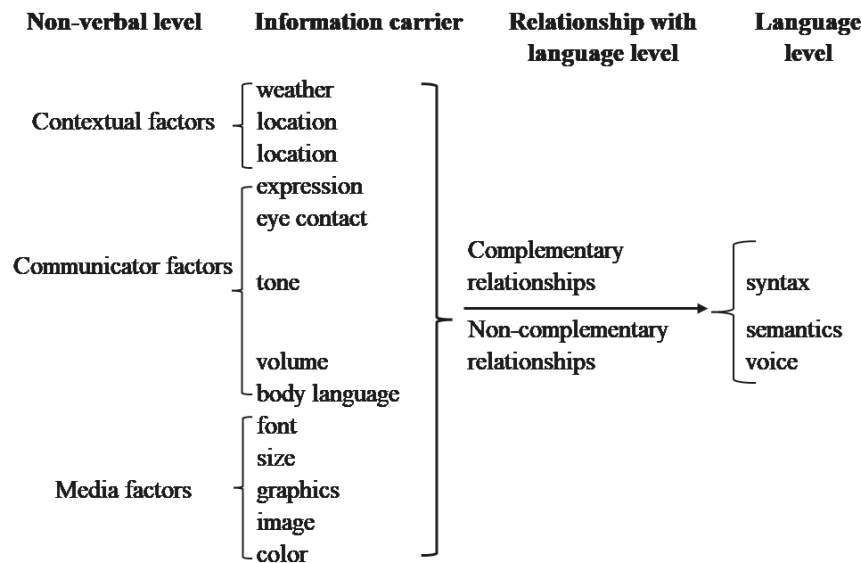


Figure 1. Multimodal Pragmatic Analysis Framework (Chen & Qian, 2011)

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.

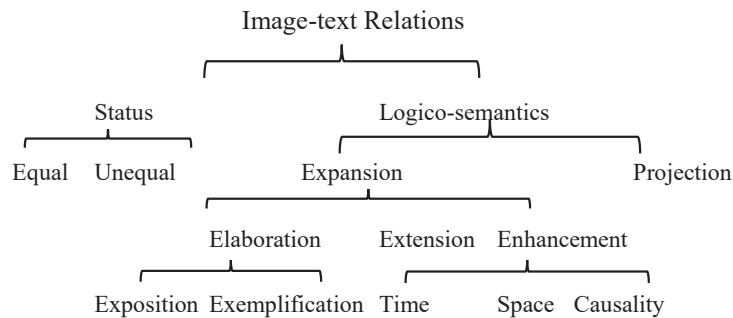


Figure 2. Image-text Relations Theory (Martinec & Salway, 2015)

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。

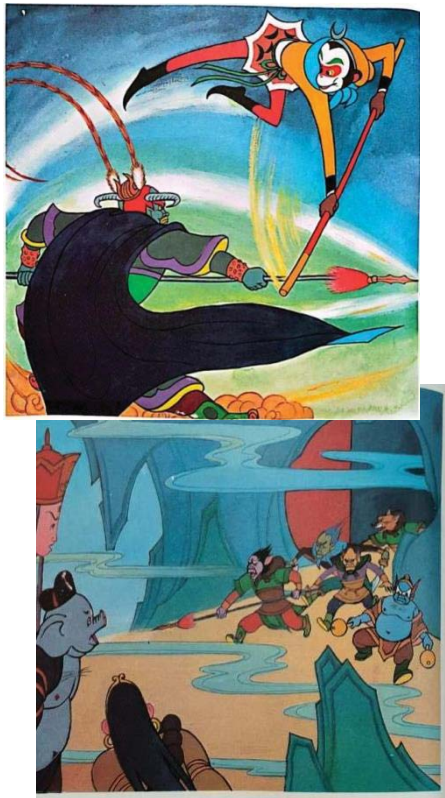
Target text: As they began to despair, the towers and buildings disappeared, and a huge cave rose in front of them. The buildings were just the magic of an anvil spirit that had been waiting there to catch people. Now many little demons came rushing out of the cave and took the three of them inside.

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

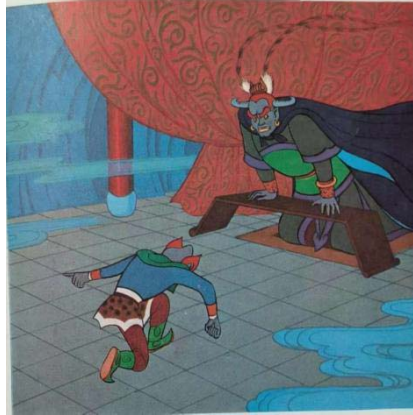
Translation example 3.

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.

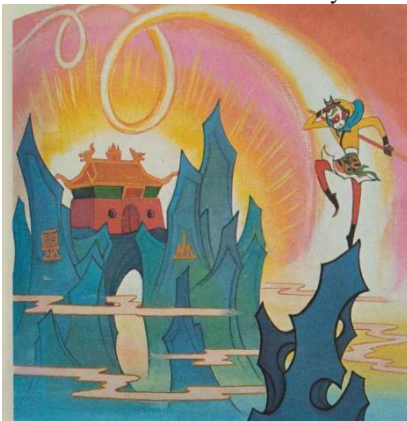
Source text: 悟空带着水伯又来叫门。那妖怪听说，提枪就来迎战。石门刚一打开，水伯就将白玉瓶往里一倒，半条黄河的水直冲向洞门。

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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