

English Translation of Traditional Chinese Medicine Classics under the Guidance of Adaptation Theory

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Abstract: Chinese medicine culture is an excellent Cultural resource management, and Chinese medical classics are the carrier and wisdom crystallization of Chinese medicine culture. Chinese medical classics are the carrier of Chinese Chinese medical culture and have important value in the dissemination of Chinese medical culture and the exchange of Chinese and Western cultures. Chinese medical classics, as an important component of Chinese classics, reflect the characteristics of Chinese discourse in terms of language and cultural dimensions. As one of the important means of cross-cultural dissemination of traditional Chinese medicine, the accuracy, readability, and acceptability of English translation of Chinese medical classics are particularly crucial. There are a large number of traditional Chinese medicine cultural words in traditional Chinese medicine books, which brings difficulties to the translation of traditional Chinese medicine books. So far, although many classic Chinese medicine classics have been translated into English, there are more or less problems from both linguistic and cultural perspectives. Traditional Chinese medicine translation requires the integration and integration of multiple disciplines, which is also a new path and direction for academic innovation in traditional Chinese medicine translation studies. From the perspective of adaptation theory, this paper analyzes the problems in the English translation of traditional Chinese patent medicines and simple preparations names, and studies the strategies for the English translation of traditional Chinese patent medicines and simple preparations names.

1. Introduction

People's understanding of society comes from specific practical activities, which in turn will affect future practical activities, forming a circular pattern of practice-cognition-practice[1]. Translation is an experiential activity, while cognition is a psychological response to people's understanding of the real world. There is cognition before translation, and without cognition, there is no translation. The two are inseparable[2]. Due to the unique textual attributes of Chinese medical classics, the era and socio-cultural background of English translators of Chinese medical classics are also different. In addition, translators hold different translation views and purposes. Therefore, there have always been translations with different understandings and expressions in the English translation of Chinese medical classics.

Chinese medical classics are a shining pearl in Chinese traditional culture, a concentrated reflection of the achievements of ancient Chinese medicine, and have laid a solid foundation for the development of medicine in future generations[3]. The development of traditional Chinese medicine has a long history, and after thousands of years of practice, it is a complete medical system. Traditional Chinese medicine, as an extremely important part of this system, has gradually entered the world with increasingly frequent international exchanges[4]. As the carrier of Chinese medical culture, the essence of meridians, yin and yang, five elements, viscera, energy, viscera, and philosophical views of traditional Chinese medicine discussed in Chinese medical classics are not only profound works on life, but also the cultural crystallization of ancient China that encompasses all aspects. The translation of Chinese medical classics has a history of over 200 years as an English language activity. With the deepening understanding of traditional Chinese medicine in Western countries, the English translation of Chinese medical classics is increasingly valued by people from

all walks of life at home and abroad, including translators, medical workers, and teachers from higher medical colleges, and has achieved certain scientific research results. Chinese medical classics are an important carrier of Chinese medical culture, representing both the characteristics of Chinese medical culture and showcasing significant discoveries and classic achievements of traditional Chinese medicine. In order to promote and disseminate Chinese medical culture more comprehensively and accurately overseas, it is necessary to conduct research on the English translation strategies of Chinese medical classics from the perspective of cultural dissemination. In recent years, the development of traditional Chinese medicine has been good worldwide, but due to cultural differences and uneven translation levels, it has to some extent affected the speed of its development. When translating Chinese medical classics, full consideration should be given to the readers' cognitive and receptive abilities. Chinese medical classics have always been the focus of the translation community due to their literary, philosophical, professional, religious, and ethnic characteristics[5]. The English translation of Chinese medical classics requires multi-level and deep-seated transformations in language, culture, and other aspects.

Traditional Chinese medicine is an important carrier of China's excellent traditional culture. With the development of world medical technology and the continuous improvement of China's cultural soft power, the cross-cultural dissemination of traditional Chinese medicine has become a characteristic business card for China to go global[6]. Given the important significance of translating Chinese medicine classics into English in the context of Chinese medical culture's "going global", we should not overlook the important status of Chinese medicine classics in Chinese medicine culture, nor should we neglect the promotion of the development of English translation of Chinese medicine classics from a cultural perspective.

2. Problems in the Translation of Chinese Medical Classics

2.1 Pass on without Transparency

Traditional Chinese medicine has a long history. It originates from China's traditional culture. It not only spreads medical knowledge, but also carries the Chinese nation's philosophy, literature, history and other cultural factors. If the cultural background is not fully understood, it is difficult to accurately translate Chinese medicine classics[7]. Taking the translation of the title of "Huangdi Neijing" as an example, some translators translated "Huangdi" into "Emperor" or "The Yellow Emperor". This literal translation method actually belongs to a misunderstanding of ancient Chinese culture. In ancient times, people reverently referred to the Xuanyuan clan as the "Huangdi", which had little to do with color and did not have corresponding English honorific meanings.

2.2 Pass on without Being Correct

In many translated versions of the name of traditional Chinese patent medicines and simple preparations, there is a common phenomenon that there are multiple translations of the same traditional Chinese patent medicines and simple preparations name, some of which are transliterated, and there are many different versions of Putonghua and dialect in transliteration; Some use literal translation, but there are also various literal translation methods in literal translation, including one-on-one literal translation and literal translation based on the translator's subjective understanding; Some parts are interpreted based on traditional Chinese medicine theory and adopt the method of free translation. Due to the insufficient knowledge and context of Chinese medical culture accumulated by some translators, there have been complete mistranslations of some Chinese medical classics. For example, the formula "Shixiaosan" actually refers to its effect of promoting blood circulation, relieving pain, removing blood stasis, and promoting innovation. After medication, the disease is unconsciously eliminated, and the patient happily loses their voice and laughs. Therefore, it is named "Shixiaosan" and cannot be translated as "Powder for Lost Smile"[8].

3. Translation Techniques of Chinese Medical Classics Guided by Adaptation Theory

Adaptation theory points out that language use is a process in which language users make

language choices based on internal and external reasons, and with different levels of consciousness. Adaptation theory proposes that language produces different variants to meet the needs of multiculturalism and people's continuous communication.

3.1 Combining Literal Translation, Free Translation, and Transliteration

Literal translation is to find an equivalent expression in the target language without changing the meaning of the source language. If the translated target language is faithful, logical, and easily accepted by readers, this translation method should be the preferred choice for translation. Free translation is mainly applied when the target language cannot find an English expression with the same meaning as the original text, then the translator should focus on being loyal to the original text and try to express it reasonably in a concise and understandable target language. But when neither of the above methods can accurately express the ideas and content of Chinese medical classics, and may even lead to some misunderstandings, it is necessary to consider loyalty to the original text, loyalty to the source culture, and use direct transliteration. In Table 1, there are six basic terminology of traditional Chinese medicine

Table 1 Six Basic Terminology of Traditional Chinese Medicine

Translation
Jing(essence)
Qi
Shen(spirit)
Yin and Yang
Wuxing(five elements)
Wuzang and Liufu(zang-fu organs)

When translating Chinese medical classics into English, consideration should also be given to the correlation between the translation and the original text. Translators should pay attention to establishing an effective correlation between the two in the process of translating and disseminating the original text, so that the translated text retains the original cultural color of traditional Chinese medicine.

3.2 Based on Ecological Translation Studies

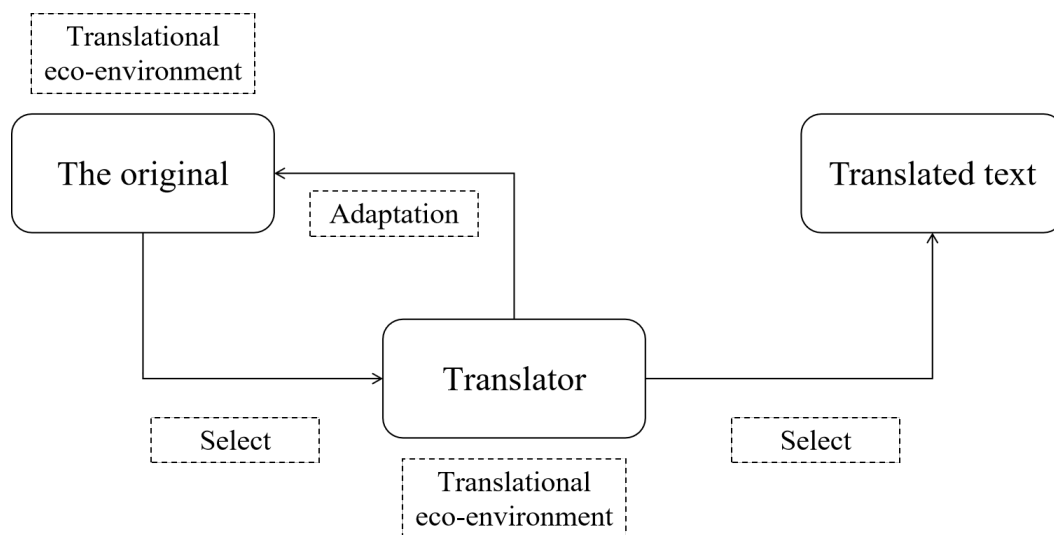


Fig.1 Translation Adaptation Selection Diagram

Translation does not come out of thin air, but is carried out in a certain environment. This specific environment is referred to as the translation ecological environment in ecological translation studies. Translators should fully consider and adapt to the translation ecological environment, and make multidimensional adaptation choices throughout the entire translation process in order to produce excellent translations. In previous translation studies, scholars often

talked more about the translation and the comparison between the translation and the original text, and the translator was often overlooked. However, ecological translation studies view the translator as the center of translation, and the translator is the link between the author and the reader. The translator centered approach focuses on the translator's subjective initiative in translation activities. Factors such as the quality of the translated work and readers' acceptance, as well as the translator's historical background, educational background, knowledge structure, and humanistic literacy, all have an impact on the translation process, as shown in Figure 1. In order to adapt to the dynamic translation ecosystem, translators need to subjectively and proactively determine specific translation methods and strategies, in order to produce suitable translations.

4. Cross Cultural Communication Strategies for Translating Chinese Medical Classics into English

4.1 Cultural Confidence

Translation is a bridge for cross-cultural communication, promoting communication and understanding between heterogeneous cultures. The translation of traditional Chinese medicine books and records carries the most brilliant essence of Chinese medical culture, and excellent translation is an effective booster for the world to understand and recognize traditional Chinese medicine technology and Chinese traditional culture[9]. The culture of traditional Chinese medicine originates from traditional Chinese culture, reflecting the spiritual essence of classic cultures such as Confucianism and Taoism. The organic unity system of people-oriented and yin-yang harmony established in Chinese medical classics combines humanistic and scientific aspects. The confidence in the dissemination of Chinese medical culture is essentially the confidence in the excellent culture that has been accumulated by the Chinese nation for thousands of years. With this confidence, one can have confidence in the external dissemination and future development of Chinese medical culture, and multiply the classic cultural heritage of traditional Chinese medicine from generation to generation. Translators should enhance their cultural literacy and translation level by studying and researching the professional knowledge of traditional Chinese medicine, fully explore the cultural value contained in Chinese medical classics, and try to eliminate misunderstandings caused by their own limitations and cultural biases. This will make the dissemination of Chinese medical culture more modern and scientific, accurately express the cultural concepts in the classics, and achieve better dissemination of Chinese medical culture[10].

4.2 Acculturation

In the process of translating Chinese medical classics into English, it is necessary to preserve the inherent cultural characteristics of traditional Chinese medicine as much as possible, so that overseas audiences can have a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of Chinese medical culture and Chinese traditional culture. The differences arising from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds are inevitable, and translators need to have a deep understanding of the original content, and then “process” the understood content to express it in a form that is easy for readers to accept. The acceptance of a translation by readers is influenced by the objective environment in which they are located. In different historical contexts, readers' perception and acceptance of the same translation will also change, and different groups of readers can accept different translations. In order to promote the widespread dissemination of Chinese medical culture, it is necessary to make the translated versions of Chinese medical classics that bear the characteristics of Chinese thinking adaptable to other cultures. The translated versions of Chinese medical classics should be logical, readable, and easy to accept for readers, which is the key to the effective dissemination of Chinese medical culture. The language used in traditional Chinese medicine is concise and comprehensive, and the content expressed in unit information is very rich, which is a unique product of Chinese culture. In order to maintain consistency in content and form between the original text and the translated text, translation often adds explanations after the translation. As a translator, when translating the original work, one often makes creative rebellions such as selecting,

deleting, adapting, excerpting, and modifying certain content, which is precisely the “loyalty” to the original work.

5. Conclusions

With the development of global integration, multiple cultural and value perspectives have influenced and blended with each other, and the overseas dissemination of Chinese medical culture, which carries the essence of the Chinese nation's culture, has ushered in its own opportunity. The main form of human practice is “communication”. People in society cannot live without communication and exchange with each other. If Chinese medicine wants to “go out”, it must improve its theoretical system, improve clinical efficacy, and attract more Western scholars to understand, learn and study Chinese medicine. Chinese medical classics not only have great value in theoretical and practical guidance for diagnosing and treating diseases, but also play an important guiding role in health preservation such as regulating life, enhancing physical fitness, and preventing diseases. Therefore, the translation of health preservation terms in Chinese medical classics is crucial. Standardized English translation of traditional Chinese patent medicines and simple preparations is the basic condition for traditional Chinese patent medicines and simple preparations to go global, is also a necessary condition for the external promotion of Chinese medicine and the external exchange of Chinese medicine culture, and is also a favorable condition for the research, development and promotion of Chinese medicine. Chinese medical classics contain profound traditional cultural connotations in China. When translating, translators should not only consider the differences in language and culture between Chinese and English, but also consider the receptivity of the target language readers. They should flexibly use translation methods to ensure that the translation can fit the three dimensions of language, culture, and communication, and better “survive” in the translation ecological environment.

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