

Research on the English Translation of Intangible Cultural Heritage Publicity Texts from the Perspective of Eco-Translatology

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ABSTRACT

With the deepening of globalization, intangible cultural heritage (ICH), as an important carrier of national history and culture, plays a significant role in promoting cultural exchange. However, due to linguistic and cultural differences and other factors, the English translation of ICH publicity texts faces many challenges. This paper first analyzes the core concepts and principles of Eco-translatology; then based on the characteristics and challenges of ICH publicity texts, it proposes translation strategies that adapt to the translation ecological environment, highlight the central position of translators, and achieve "three-dimensional" transformation.

KEYWORDS

Eco-translatology; intangible cultural heritage publicity texts; translation strategies

1 Introduction

China has a long history and vast territory, and the unique natural and social conditions of different regions have given rise to diverse cultures, forming distinctive intangible cultural heritages. As a bridge connecting different cultures and languages, the translation quality of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) publicity texts directly affects the recognition and influence of intangible cultural heritage abroad. It is a big challenge for translators to maintain the cultural characteristics of the source language and to make the translation acceptable in the cultural background and reception habits of the target language readers. This paper will employ the theory of Eco-translatology to explore the translation strategies of ICH publicity texts, providing useful references and insights for improving the translation quality and effectiveness of ICH publicity texts and promoting the "going out" of intangible cultural heritage.

2 Eco-Translatology

Eco-translatology, proposed by Professor Hu Gensheng, a renowned Chinese scholar, is a relatively new translation theory. Based on the study of ecology, this theory regards translation activities as an ecosystem, emphasizing the interactive relationship between the translator and the ecological environment of translation. This theory holds that translation activities involve not only the linguistic conversion between the source texts and target texts but also interactions and adaptations across multiple dimensions, including culture, communication and social factors. Therefore, translators should take the impact of the translation ecological environment into full consideration before choosing appropriate translation strategies to achieve the optimal adaptation and selection between the source and target texts.

The research content of Eco-translatology mainly includes macro-level and micro-level studies. Macro-level research focuses on constructing and optimizing the ecological environment of translation, the central position and role of translators, and the selection of translation strategies and methods. Micro-level research has a different focus, which emphasizes the "three-dimensional" transformation (linguistic, communicative and cultural transformation) in the translation process, as well as the assessment and standardization of translation quality. This theory provides a new perspective and approach for the international transmission and exchange of intangible cultural heritage.

3 Characteristics of Intangible Cultural Heritage Publicity Texts

ICH publicity texts have unique characteristics. First, these texts often contain rich historical and cultural information, ethnic features, and artistic value, requiring translators to have a profound cultural background and interdisciplinary knowledge. Second, ICH publicity texts focus on conveying cultural information and artistic value, necessitating accurate transmission of the cultural connotations and artistic characteristics of the original text by translators. Lastly, the language style of ICH publicity texts is diverse, including narration, description, argumentation, and other modes of expression. Therefore, appropriate translation strategies should be used according to the type of the original text and translating purpose.

4 Challenges in Translating Intangible Cultural Heritage Publicity Texts

Due to language barriers, cultural differences and other factors, the translation of intangible cultural heritage texts for international promotion faces numerous challenges. The first challenge lies in language. Chinese and English differ in vocabulary, grammar, and expression habits, which may lead to issues such as misuse of words or improper grammar during translation. The second challenge is cultural differences. Variations in cultural backgrounds, values, and ways of thinking among different countries and ethnic groups can make it difficult to accurately convey certain cultural elements from the source text in the translated version. Finally, a major challenge for translators is balancing the preservation of the original text's cultural characteristics with the need to adapt to the target audience's cultural context and reception habits. Translating ICH publicity texts requires maintaining the cultural essence of the original while ensuring the translation aligns with the target readers' cultural background and preferences, which poses a significant challenge for translators.

5 Application of Eco-Translatology in Translating Intangible Cultural Heritage Publicity Texts

5.1 Adapting to the Translation Eco-Environment

According to the principle of Eco-translatology, the translation activities should be suitable for the translation eco-environment. In the translation of ICH publicity texts, translators need to actively construct an eco-environment suitable for such translations. In the first place, translators must have a deep understanding of the cultural background and traditional values of the target audience, which helps them accurately grasp the target readers' reception habits and aesthetic preferences, enabling them to choose proper translation strategies. In addition, translators should pay attention to the political, economic, and cultural dynamics of the target language country and adjust their translation strategies in a timely manner to adapt to changing environments.

5.2 Emphasizing the Central Role of the Translator

Eco-translatology posits that the translator occupies a central role in the translation process, serving as the main decision-maker. In translating intangible cultural heritage texts, translators must fully take initiative to master different translation strategies so as to use them in different translation eco-environment. They should flexibly adjust their strategies according to the characteristics of the source text, the needs of the target audience, and changes in the translation eco-environment to achieve optimal translation outcomes. Furthermore, translators should actively participate in the translation quality assessment process, identify their strengths and weaknesses, and make improvements based on feedback.

5.3 Achieving "Three-Dimensional" Transformation

The core theory of Eco-translatology is the "three-dimensional" transformation in which the roles of language, culture, and communication should be paid attention to. When translating ICH publicity texts, translators need to achieve these three levels of transformation to ensure translation quality and effectiveness.

5.3.1 Linguistic Dimension Transformation

Translators should be fully aware of the linguistic differences between languages and adopt proper strategies, so as to ensure the fluency of the translated text and accurately convey the original meaning. Specifically, translators need to pay attention to the following aspects of linguistic transformation. Lexical transformation is absolutely necessary in many cases. Chinese and English differ in vocabulary, such as polysemy and extended meanings. Translators must accurately understand the meanings of words in the source text and choose appropriate English equivalents based on the target audiences cultural background and reception habits. Grammatical transformation contributes to the accurate expression of meaning. Chinese and English differ in grammatical structures, such as sentence components and word order. Translators need to adjust their language according to English grammatical rules to ensure the translated text is grammatically correct and fluent. Transformation in expression habits is also helpful. There are different habits of expressing ideas in Chinese and English, such as tone and rhetorical devices. Translators should understand the target audience's expression habits and adjust the translation to align with their aesthetic preferences.

5.3.2 Cultural Dimension Transformation

In this level transformation, translators usually focus on cultural elements and characteristics in the source text and

their appropriate handling and conveyance in the translated text to ensure effective cross-cultural communication. There are many culture-loaded words which contain rich cultural and historical meanings in ICH publicity texts. Translators need to deeply understand the cultural and historical background involved in the source text to accurately identify its cultural elements and characteristics. Based on this understanding, translators should employ proper translation strategies to ensure the effective conveyance of cultural elements. Transliteration with explanation, literal translation with explanation, free translation, substitution, etc. can be flexibly used in different situations to ensure the translation's accuracy and readability, allowing the target audience to appreciate the charm and value of Chinese culture.

Transliteration is a good way to retain the original color of the source text. In many cases, an explanation or annotation is necessary and helpful to convey culture and ensure readers' understanding. For example, “妈祖信仰” can be translated into “Mazu belief and customs, a traditional Chinese folk belief related to maritime protection”. Transliteration supplemented by explanation is adopted here. The transliteration “Mazu” preserves the cultural essence, while the explanation helps readers understand its connection to maritime protection, balancing the linguistic and cultural dimensions. Similarly, “少林功夫” can be translated as “Shaolin Kungfu, a traditional Chinese martial art originating from the Shaolin Temple”.

Literal translation with explanation or annotation is often employed in the translation of ICH publicity texts. For instance, “剪纸” can be literally translated as “paper cutting”, but the translation alone cannot convey the cultural meaning beneath it. Thus, an explanation or annotation “a traditional Chinese folk art that involves cutting intricate designs into paper, often used for decorative purposes during festivals and celebrations” should be added. The literal translation “paper cutting” preserves the original meaning and is easily understandable to English speakers. The annotation provides additional context and cultural significance, explaining that it is a traditional Chinese folk art, its intricate nature, and its common use during festivals and celebrations. This helps English-speaking audiences understand not just the term, but also its cultural importance and usage.

5.3.3 Communicative Dimension Transformation

Communicative dimension transformation requires translators to pay attention to communicative function of the source text and its readability and acceptability, ensuring that the translated text conveys the original communicative message and achieves effective cross-cultural communication. Before translating intangible cultural heritage publicity texts, translators should be clear about what the source text wants to convey. They must deeply comprehend the author's intended message and ensure its accurate conveyance in the translated text. In addition, translators should also pay attention to the target audience's reception habits. They need to understand the cultural background, values, and ways of thinking of the target readers to adjust the expression and tone of the translation accordingly. Moreover, translators should ensure the coherence and readability of the translated text. The translation should be logically coherent and clearly expressed, enabling the target audience to easily understand the communicative intent and message of the source text.

6 Conclusion

In the new era of socialism, the international dissemination of China's traditional culture helps to enhance people's cultural confidence, boost our country's cultural power, and enable the world to know China better. It also promotes cultural exchanges between China and other countries, and fosters the coexistence and prosperity of diverse cultures. Guided by Eco-translatology, the English translation of intangible cultural heritage publicity texts should focus on the balance and harmony of the cultural ecosystem, adhering to the principles of holistic connection, balance, harmony, and the embodiment of ecological aesthetics. Translators need to deeply understand the cultural connotations and background of ICH and adopt a combination of domestication and foreignization strategies to ensure that the translation can be accessible to the target language readers while reflecting the cultural characteristics of the original text. Moreover, to ensure the accuracy and readability of the translation, translators should conduct necessary transformation in language, culture and communication.

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