A Study on the Readability of Tea Culture Translation from the Perspective of International Students' Cultural Identity

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Abstract: In the context of the current cultural integration, the effective transmission of one's own culture is an inevitable research focus. Chinese tea culture is broad and profound, and promoting Chinese tea culture to "go global" is an effective way to enhance the soft power of national culture. Translation, as a key means for Chinese tea culture to "go global", merits special attention. Research indicates the translation inaccuracy or inapplicability can hinder the cultural identity and is not conducive to the promotion of tea culture. This paper explores the readability of tea culture translation from the perspective of international students' cultural identity, with the aim of offering insights for the future transmission of Chinese tea culture.

Keywords: International students; Cultural identity perspective; Tea culture; Translation readability

Introduction

With the deepening of global cultural exchanges, it is crucial to focus on the readability of translation in order to realize the effective transmission of one's own culture. Through the analysis of relevant literature, it is found that due to the translators' misconception, the translated work suffers from low transmission and acceptance, making it difficult to achieve the goal of cultural identity. In light of this situation, the difficulties of cultural transmission should be acknowledged, the efforts should be made to ground the inherent traits of one's own culture, and the full consideration should be given to the receptivity of the target culture in translation, to offer insights for the global outreach of Chinese culture. This paper takes Chinese tea culture as a starting point to explore the readability of tea culture translation from the perspective of international students' cultural identity for reference.

1. Importance of Readability of Tea Culture Translation

The origin of tea can be traced back to the distant Shennong period. In the long process of development, tea has gradually surpassed the simple material properties and been endowed with rich spiritual connotations. While satisfying the basic needs of quenching thirst and refreshing mind, it also plays the role of edifying sentiment, forming a unique charm of tea culture. In addition, Chinese tea culture embraces and integrates the essence of diverse ideologies from Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism. Its core connotation "harmony" and "respect", and its traditional customs of "meeting friends with tea" and "welcoming guests with tea" both embody the spirit of the Chinese nation.

Tea culture plays a vital role in the process of learning, understanding and identifying with Chinese culture for international students. As a carrier to spread Chinese tea culture, the readability of tea culture translation has a significant impact on the cultural identity of international students. Tea culture translation works with high readability can help international students eliminate language and cultural barriers, understand the history, philosophy, art and other aspects of tea culture, experience the charm and spiritual connotation of tea culture, thereby fostering a strong interest and sense of identity, and spontaneously becoming the ambassador of Chinese tea cultural transmission.

2. Current Situation of Readability of Tea Culture Translation

2.1 Cognitive Differences

The level of international students' knowledge regarding Chinese tea culture differs, and the existing translation works cannot fully meet the differentiated translation needs arising from the cognitive differences.

2.2 Limited Auxiliary Resources

The visual elements, such as pictures and charts, which help to improve the readability of tea culture translation are not widely used, and high-quality bilingual reference materials are rare. This limits international students' understanding of tea cultural terms and concepts.

2.3 Inconsistent Translation Strategies

Different translators may adopt different translation strategies, such as the ratio of literal translation to free translation, the addition of annotations, and cultural adaptation, which leads to varying degrees of difference in the readability of translated works.

2.4 Inadequate Cultural Adaptation

Some translated works do not fully consider the cultural background and reading habits of international students, which makes the translation difficult to resonate and affects readers' cultural identity.

2.5 Insufficient Interdisciplinary Cooperation

Tea culture translation needs multi-disciplinary knowledge such as linguistics, translation studies, culturology, etc., but the interdisciplinary cooperation is not enough, which affects the comprehensive quality of translation.

2.6 Imperfect Feedback Mechanism

There is no effective feedback mechanism to collect international students' opinions and suggestions on tea culture translation, which limits the continuous improvement of translation quality.

3. Factors Influencing Readability of Tea Culture Translation

3.1 Complexity of Original Text

Tea culture contains rich historical, philosophical and aesthetic implications. The complexity and obscure nature of the original text, filled with numerous professional terms and abstract concepts, can significantly affect the translation difficulty and readability.

3.2 Translators' Cultural Understanding and Translation Skills

The translator's language conversion ability and cross-cultural communication ability are crucial to ensure the accuracy, fluency and applicability of the translation. Lack of bilingual and bicultural competence can lead to mistranslation or omission of important cultural information, hence affecting readability.

3.3 Vocabulary and Grammar

Many terms and concepts in tea culture do not have direct equivalences in the target language, and the grammars of the source language and the target language are inevitably different, which is a challenge for improving readability.

3.4 Transmission of Cultural Background Knowledge

Tea culture translation is not only the conversion of words, but also the transmission of cultural background knowledge. Without the corresponding cultural background knowledge, target readers may struggle to grasp the deep cultural connotation, regardless of the precision of the translation.

3.5 Target Readers' Expectation and Acceptability

Different target groups of readers have different expectations and levels of acceptance for translated works. Ignoring or insufficiently considering the specific needs and acceptability of target readers often leads to the wrong selection of translation strategies, which affects the readability of the translation.

3.6 Application Scenario and Strategy Selection

Different application scenarios need to highlight different content and adopt different language styles in translation. Whether the application scenario of tea culture translation is clearly defined is directly related to the formulation of translation scheme and the readability of the translation.

4. Tea Culture Translation Strategies

4.1 Target Audience Positioning and Cultural Adaptation

Gather information through surveys on international students' interest, knowledge level, and reading habits about tea culture and formulate tailored translation strategies. Appropriately localize content involving specific cultural background, such as comparing certain elements of Chinese tea culture with similar cultural phenomena in international students' home countries when translating, so as to guide them to naturally connect the original experience with the new knowledge and deepen their understanding.

4.2 Application of Corpus

Through the research of relevant academic literature, it is found that corpora, as a collection of real language materials in a natural context, provides a solid empirical basis for the analysis of language and its variant characteristics [1]. In the practice of tea culture translation, the application of corpora can not only improve the translation quality, but also help evaluate whether the translation is in line with the acceptability of the target culture. Taking the core concept of tea culture, "茶道" for example, a search in the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) reveals the usage frequency of "tea ceremony" is significantly higher than that of "tea tao", which indicates it has been integrated into the target cultural context and widely accepted.

4.3 Adapting to Application Scenarios

Scenario adaptation enhances readability in translation. Taking "tea ceremony" and "tea tao" for example, the term "ceremony" originates from English culture and enjoys higher popularity and acceptance; conversely, "tea tao," being a foreign term, is more prone to rejection during its transmission. The term "tea ceremony" does not prominently feature ethnic characteristics of Chinese culture and is also known as "tea etiquette" in specific contexts, thus making it suitable for the initial promotion of tea culture. [2]. It is easier to be accepted by international students who are new to tea culture, and contributes positively to tea culture's transmission. In the official or academic circles, it is recommended to use "tea tao" and "tea ceremony" together to highlight Chinese characteristics.

4.4 Combination of Domestication and Foreignization

From the perspective of translation content, to ensure the feasibility of tea culture translation and meet the purpose of cultural identity, it is necessary to select texts that are easily accepted by western audiences in translation, and the translation should not only have the universality of western literature, but also have local characteristics [3]. The balance between domestication and foreignization strategies should be sought based on the circumstances to achieve the dual effect of cultural fidelity and linguistic affinity.

4.5 Cultural Reference and Context Construction

When translating, introduce comparisons with similar phenomena in other cultures, such as citing local tea or other beverage cultures that international students are familiar with as reference. Translated works add introductions to the translation, provide clear definitions and background information for terms, allusions or idioms that are difficult to be directly converted through footnotes, endnotes or in-text explanations, and supplement with visual elements such as pictures, charts, maps, etc., to build a contextual framework and help international students more intuitively understand the types of tea, tea brewing tools and tea art movements.

4.6 Cross-border Collaboration and Proofreading Tests

To ensure that the translated work can be integrated into a culturally recognized context, it is recommended to adopt strategies such as collaboration with tea culture experts and joint translation by Chinese and foreign translators. This can not only ensure the professionalism of translation, but also accurately reflect the linguistic habits, literary preferences and aesthetic orientation of foreign readers, and effectively reduce the discomfort caused by cultural differences in the code conversion period. After translating, invite international students from different cultural backgrounds to proofread the translation, collect their feedback, and optimize the translation accordingly.

Concluding remarks: In summary, in the current international context, to achieve the goal of promoting Chinese tea culture's "going global" and "going far", it is essential to use the perspective of international students as a mirror. By adopting the viewpoint of others, we can explore translation strategies more scientifically to enhance the readability of tea culture translation. This approach helps international students overcome cultural barriers, strengthens their identity with Chinese tea culture, and leverages their roles as bridges for the global transmission of Chinese culture, thereby aiding in the construction of a positive "Chinese image."

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