English Translation of Culture-Loaded Words
—A Corpus Based Study

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Under the background of Chinese culture "going out" initiative, research on the translation of culture-loaded words can speed up the spread of Chinese culture. Firstly, the author builds a parallel corpus based on the English translation and Chinese version of *"Xi Jinping: The Governance of the Country" (Volume III).* Secondly, a total of 800 culture-loaded words was collected from this book among which the author selected 135 culture-loaded words by random sampling, and divided them into four categories: social culture-loaded words, material culture-loaded words, ecological culture-loaded words, and language culture-loaded words according to Nida's classification of culture-loaded words. Thirdly, the study found that foreignization was more preferred by the translators and the author summarized the main translation strategies of culture-loaded words, including literal translation, free translation, transliteration plus annotation, literal translation plus annotation, etc. Finally, seven typical examples were selected for further analysis and the author illustrated how the application of translation strategies promoted Chinese culture "go out" initiative.

Keywords: culture-loaded word, *"Xi Jinping: The Governance of the Country" (Volume III)*, translation strategy

Introduction

With the rapid development of economy and the continuous enhancement of comprehensive national strength, China's status in the international community has been further improved, and the desire for Chinese culture going out initiative is becoming more and more urgent. As an essential part of a country's soft power, culture not only symbolizes the profound historical heritage of a nation, but also represents a business card for the country's image. In the process of disseminating Chinese culture, the translation of culture-loaded words is a major difficulty. The domestic scholar Xu firstly mentioned culture-loaded words in his article *Culturally Loaded Words and Foreign Language Teaching* in 1980. In this article, he took "snow" as an example to elaborate on the unique characteristics and cultural connotation of the same word in different cultures. Nida (2001) proposed that culture is the sum of social beliefs and practices, and language is the medium for expressing and transmitting beliefs. In 1993, Nida divided culture-loaded words into five categories, namely ecological culture-loaded words, material culture-loaded words, social cultural-loaded words, religious culture-loaded words, and language culture-loaded words. Peter Newmark (2001, p. 70) made slight changes on

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the basis of Nida's classification and divided it into proper names, historical institutional terms, international institution terms, national institution terms and cultural terms.

Scholars at home and abroad have made profound researches on the translation of culture-loaded words. In foreign countries, scholars mainly study the translation strategies and application of culture-loaded words. Mekheimer (2012) conducted research on the translation of English literature in Arabic and advocated the use of culture-loaded words in translation teaching. Xia (2010) studied the translation strategies of the Chinese bureaucratic system in *A Dream of Red Mansions*. Adelnia and Dastjerdi (2011) studied the food-related culture-loaded words in *A Dream of Red Mansions* and their corresponding translation strategies. Marco (2019) studied culture-loaded words based on the corpus using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. In China, under the influence of national policies since the beginning of the 21st century, the research on culture-loaded words has grown rapidly. Many domestic scholars have conducted in-depth research on culture-loaded words from different perspectives, and have achieved fruitful results. Zheng (2016) emphasized the importance of the export of Chinese culture and expounds that due to the disparity in comprehensive national strength, culture communication is not equal in international communication. In order to better spread Chinese culture, he summarized six translation strategies of culture-loaded words. Sun and Han (2021) analyzed the English translation of cultural-loaded words in the scientific and technological text "Beijing Folding" from the perspective of eco-translatology. Eco-translatology is Chinese native translation theory, and applying it to the study of culture-loaded words can better help Chinese culture "going out" initiative.

"Xi Jinping: The Governance of the Country" (Volume III) contains important speeches and instructions made by Xi Jinping from October 18, 2017 to January 13, 2020, which profoundly reflects Xi Jinping's new ideas and new perspectives as the top leader of the party and the country. The book has been published overseas in more than 20 languages and obtains widely acknowledgements worldwide. A large number of cultural-loaded words are contained in this book including political terms, famous poems, and idioms that embody the thought of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Therefore, translation research on the culture-loaded words that best reflect Chinese characteristics in the book can not only guide the translation practice of political texts but also enable foreign readers to better understand Chinese culture and promote China's development on the world stage.

Research Design

Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to explore the translation strategies of culture-loaded words in *"Xi Jinping: The Governance of China" (Volume III)* under the background of Chinese culture "going out" initiative. Therefore, it aims to answer the following research questions:

Q1: What are the characteristics of culture-loaded words in *"Xi Jinping: The Governance of China" (Volume III)*?

Q2: What translation strategies are preferred in the translation of culture-loaded words and what effects do they produce?

Q3: How does the translation strategy used in the translation of culture-loaded words promote Chinese culture "going out" initiative?

Research Method

To answer the research question, this research adopted a self-built corpus research method. Macro-statistics and sampling statistics were used and analyzed with examples. First, the electronic version of the text was collected, and the corpus was *"Xi Jinping: The Governance of China" (Volume III)* in Chinese and English. Second, the author uses Tmxmall online matching software to align the two texts. Due to the language and cultural differences between Chinese and English, there are a large number of deletions and a few additions to the original text in the translation. Therefore, in the alignment process, manual alignment should be supplemented, and the sentences or paragraphs with English omitted translations in Chinese or Chinese without English translations should be classified into the previous paragraph or the next paragraph. Third, the text is exported in TXT form and stored in the computer. Then, based on the self-built corpus, 4 types of culture-loaded words were retrieved through the search function of the software, and a total of 800 culture-loaded words were found. Finally, due to the large sample size, 135 culture-loaded words were selected from 800 culture-loaded words by random sampling. During the retrieval process, the translation strategies applied to the vocabulary were manually marked, and 5 representative culture-loaded words were selected as examples to analyze their translation strategies in detail.

Result and Discussion

Result of Translation Strategies

Table 1
The Percentage of Translation Methods in Foreignization

Translation methods	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Literal translation	63	74.12
Literal translation plus annotation	10	11.76
Transliteration plus annotation	7	8.24
Transliteration plus literal translation	5	5.88
Total	85	100

Table 2
The Percentage of Translation Methods in Domestication

Translation methods	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Free translation	36	72
Addition	8	16
Omission	6	12
Total	50	100

Table 3
The Percentage of Translation Strategies

Translation strategies	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Foreignization	85	63
Domestication	50	37
Total	135	100

As is shown in Table 3, among the total 135 culture-loaded words, 85 of them apply the translation strategy of foreignization with the percentage of 63% and the rest of it mainly adopts the strategy of

domestication, which account for 37%. Venuti can be regarded as the representative of foreignization translation, who says that his intention of proposing foreignization strategy is to "develop a theory and practice of translation that resists dominant target-language cultural values so as to signify the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text" (Venuti, 2004). Foreignization allows readers to experience the alien cultures by retaining the cultural flavor of the source language. However, in some cases, some culture-loaded words can't be equally translated through foreignization. In order to overcome cultural differences, domestication is applied to minimize the foreignness of the source-language text to facilitate the target-language readers' understanding at the cost of sacrificing part of the cultural identity. In this book, it can be concluded that under the background of Chinese culture "going out" initiative, the adaptation of foreignization is more preferred by translators due to its essential part in disseminating Chinese culture.

More specifically, in the case of Table 1 and Table 2, there are seven types of translation methods applied in the translation process. It is clear that literal translation in foreignization is most frequently used in the translation of culture-loaded words in this book. It can better convey the original Chinese culture to the target readers without changing its form. All four kinds of culture-loaded word prefer to use literal translation, especially the social culture-loaded words and language culture-loaded words. Social culture-loaded words are produced in a specific social and cultural context, which nearly cover every aspect of social life like social activities, historical allusions, festival customs, etc. Different social context may produce a large variety of social culture-loaded terms due to the cultural difference. Therefore, in China social culture-loaded words can be divided into political terms with Chinese characteristics, Chinese common saying, and rhetoric. The literal translation method applied here not only indicates a country's cultural confidence but also offers Westerners an opportunity to assimilate Chinese culture. Language is the carrier of culture, the cultural difference between different countries give birth to linguistic culture-loaded words, which mainly includes proverbs, idioms, dialect, etc. The translation of linguistic culture-loaded words poses great challenge to the translator due to their abundant cultural connotation and characteristics. Therefore, in addition to the literal translation, the methods of free translation and literal translation plus annotation are also applied to it.

Application of Foreignization

Literal translation

Literal translation takes both content and form into account in the translation process, which can accurately express the content of the original without changing its form. All the four kinds of culture-loaded words in this book prefers to adopt literal translation.

> We have taken firm action to "take out tigers", "swat flies" and "hunt down foxes". (Xi Jinping, 2020, p. 47)

In the example one, "打虎", "拍蝇", "猎狐" are expressions with Chinese characteristics, which belong to the classification of ecological culture-loaded words. The translator adopts literal translation because there exist equivalent images in the Western culture. However, what the three phrases aim to convey is the government's firm determination to fight against corruption. Here, tiger, fly and fox refer to corrupt bureaucracy instead of animals. Due to the difference in social and political system, target-language readers may be confused about such expression, therefore they need actively make additional efforts to know more about Chinese culture, which is a better way to help Chinese culture "going out" initiative.

Literal translation plus annotation

Due to cultural differences between Chinese and English, in the translation practice some words with Chinese characteristics are difficult to find equivalent words in English. In such cases, an annotation is often applied to make up for the lexical vacancy. Annotation can usually supplement relevant information such as background information and historical origin to facilitate target language readers' understanding.

> ……for this is our motto, "Not bent on praise for its bright colors, but on leaving its fragrance to all." [Wang Mian: Ink Plum (Mo Mei). Wang Mian (1310-1359) was a painter and poet of the Yuan Dynasty. The allusion in the poem is to appreciate things for their qualities rather than their looks, and President Xi was indicating that while China seeks no flattery, it expects honest and balanced reporting.] (Xi Jinping, 2020, p. 68)

In the example two, the author adopts the literal translation to translate Chinese classical verses, and an annotation is provided to avoid target readers' confusion about the content. The annotation gives a brief introduction to the poet Wang Mian and the background of the poem. Ancient poems as traditional Chinese culture reflect the profound heritage of Chinese culture and embody a nation's cultural self-confidence. The English translation is faithful to both the original and the form, which allows foreign audiences to better understand the connotation of Chinese culture.

Transliteration plus annotation

Transliteration can accurately convey the pronunciation of culture-loaded words and with the help of annotation reader can understand the content of these specific items.

> In the upper reaches, we need to launch a number of key programs for protecting, restoring and developing the local ecosystem and improving water conservation, particularly in the Sanjiangyuan Natural Reserve in Qinghai, the Chilian Mountains area bordering Qinghai and Gansu, and the Gannan water conservation area in Gansu. (Xi Jinping, 2020, p. 377)

In the example nine, "三江源", "祁连山", "甘南黄河" are three attractions in China. The translator separately translates them into "Sanjiangyuan Natural Reserve in Qinghai", "the Chilian Mountains area bordering Qinghai and Gansu", and "the Gannan water conservation area in Gansu" with the combination of transliteration and annotation strategy. When translating the names of these places, the translator adopts transliteration to preserve the cultural connotation. In order to let the target readers better understand the specific contents, the author applies annotation to explain the locations and functions of these places. Transliteration plus annotation not only preserve the cultural features of the source language but also avoid target reader's misinterpretation.

Application of Domestication

Free translation

Free translation retains the meaning of the original but is not constrained by the form of the original. When translating words and sentences with strong Chinese characteristics, the translator, on the basis of understanding the connotation of the source language, translates the original text into the cultural context of the target language so as to achieve cross-cultural communication.

> When Confucius looks down from the peak of the Dongshan Mountain, the local kingdom of Lu comes into view; when he looks down from the peak of Mount Tai, the whole land comes into view. (Xi Jinping, 2020, p. 440)

In the example one, President Xi quotes this sentence to advocate that the member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization can stand at the height of promoting the progress of human civilization to jointly safeguard world peace and development. Here "小" is translated into "come into view" by the free translation, which not only highly summarizes the meaning of the whole sentence but also shows the foresight of President Xi. If a literal translation method is adopted, the readers may feel confused about China's arrogant attitude towards other countries.

Omission

Different from Chinese, English prefers to be concise. Therefore, the application of omission can remove redundancy in Chinese expressions, allowing target readers to better understand the source language.

> We should conduct in-depth research to identify prominent problems. (Xi Jinping, 2020, p. 520)

In the example three, the translation of "解剖麻雀" is omitted in that the translation of "发现典型" contains the connotation it aims to convey. If "解剖麻雀" is translated into " anatomy of a sparrow" without any explanation, foreign readers may be confused about such behaviors. On the basis of accurately expressing the content of source language, the author omits the translation of "解剖麻雀" to facilitate readers' reading experience.

Conclusion

This article mainly dilates on the translation strategies of culture-loaded words in *"Xi Jinping: The Governance of China" (Volume III)* under the background of Chinese culture "going out" initiative. The study finds that the translation strategies of foreignization and literal translation are more preferred by the authors and meanwhile a variety of translation methods are adopted in this book. In a word, foreignization in translation will be a general trend and the necessity of domestication also can't be undervalued. However, this paper also has some limitations. Firstly, the corpus is of small size. In this study, the author only randomly selects 135 culture-loaded words in the total 800 terms, which may make the result not so applicable. Secondly, the selection of culture-loaded words is based on Nida's classification, which may be subjective. Lastly, the analysis of the 135 culture-loaded words may not cover all the translation strategies applied in this book. Therefore, in future analysis, the authors can build a more comprehensive corpus and analyze it from different systematic perspective so that more accurate data can be concluded about the translation strategies of culture-loaded words. And, the following researchers are able to better translate culture-loaded words, thus making the cultural exchange between China and the West be in an equal, harmonious way.

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