

## Translation Strategies of cultural default in Traditional Chinese Medicine Classics from the Perspective of Skopos Theory

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**Abstract:** In recent years, the concept of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) and TCM therapy have received extensive attention in various countries. The trust and demand of people in various countries for TCM are increasing day by day. TCM has gradually become an irreplaceable part of the world medical science system. As one of the four classic works of TCM, “Inner Canon of the Yellow Emperor” is rich in TCM theories and rich in cultural details. In the English translation of western TCM and other classics, the research on the English translation of “Inner Canon of the Yellow Emperor” plays an extremely important role. The Chinese medicine language contains rich Chinese culture and philosophical connotations, which leads to the cultural default becoming a difficult problem in the translation of Chinese medicine classics. The cultural default compensation strategy is not static. To preserve the continuity and integrity of heterogeneous cultures, a variety of translations should be combined. An empirical study of the cultural default phenomenon in the English translation of “Inner Canon of the Yellow Emperor” can summarize the effective translation methods and compensation strategies.

### 1. Introduction

English is the mainstream language nowadays, and the translation and research of TCM works represent the development of English translation of TCM to some extent. TCM has a long history of thousands of years and contains rich traditional Chinese culture. Under the background of the increasingly international trend of Chinese medicine, the English translation of Chinese medicine terms plays a vital role in the smooth progress of information and cultural exchange [1]. “Inner Canon of the Yellow Emperor” is a representative of TCM and traditional Chinese culture. It is all-encompassing, obscure and of great cultural value. The research on the English translation of Inner Canon of the Yellow Emperor plays an extremely important role in the English translation of the western spread of TCM and other ancient books. As an important part of Chinese traditional culture, the spread of Chinese medicine culture in the international community is also heating up. More and more Chinese cultural enthusiasts and Chinese medicine enthusiasts are eager to appreciate the charm of Chinese medicine culture [2]. Culture is the general pattern of a society's unique beliefs, habits, institutions, goals and technologies [3]. Cultural default, if not handled well, will result in missing content or cultural misunderstanding, affecting the smooth progress of intercultural communication and the spread of Chinese medicine culture [4].

The study of translation of classic Chinese medicine works is of course important, but the importance of translation studies in modern Chinese medicine works must not be underestimated [5]. Cultural translation is not a translation culture, but a language in which translation contains cultural information. Therefore, translators should not only be proficient in both English and Chinese, but should also have a strong cultural awareness and understand the cultural background of Chinese medicine terminology [6]. TCM is a living fossil in traditional Chinese culture, and there are many unique cultural factors. For a long time, the focus and difficulty of translator transcoding has always been the lack of culture in the process of transforming this unique cultural factor from narrow language to English [7]. Against the background of the world's urgent demand for Chinese culture and TCM culture, the cause of English translation of TCM has spread like fire at home and abroad. English versions of various TCM works, including the English versions of TCM classics, have emerged as the times require [8]. From the perspective of cultural translation of TCM classics,

in terms of speed and scope, compared with the surface structure of culture, the deep structure of culture is obviously backward. An empirical study on the phenomenon of cultural default in the English translation of “Inner Canon of the Yellow Emperor” can summarize effective translation methods and compensation strategies, and pay attention to the cultural exchange function of the translation in the future TCM translation work.

## 2. Influence of Chinese Medicine Culture on English Translation of Chinese Medicine Terms

### 2.1 Reception Theory and Its Guidance to Translation Studies

Although the construction of Chinese medicine English corpus is not perfect at present, researchers of English translation of Chinese medicine have realized that Chinese medicine English corpus will be a new subject of Chinese medicine English research. Scholars at home and abroad generally pay more attention to the medical value of TCM terms while ignoring the cultural connotation they carry when formulating standard English translations. However, in a sense, the target readers have different inherent consciousness. From the perspective of degree of difference, it can be divided into absolute dynamic and relative dynamic cultural default. The former refers to cultural default with corresponding words in the corresponding language but with completely opposite meanings. Cultural default refers to the fact that when the author communicates with the target readers through the created text, some cultural background knowledge that both sides know is not clearly expressed through the text. So as to improve the efficiency of communication, or achieve some rhetorical effect, and increase the aesthetic value of the text.

According to sociolinguistics, the reason why cultural default occurs is that the author and the reader have the same social and cultural background and have the same cultural knowledge, so the obvious cultural knowledge can be omitted in the process of communication. Only someone who has a good understanding of the speaker's beliefs can explain the speaker's speech. Without understanding the speaker's speech, it is impossible to make a detailed distinction between the speaker's beliefs. Correct understanding of the connotation of medicinal materials is the key to translation. Fig. 1 is a comprehensive model of translators' research.

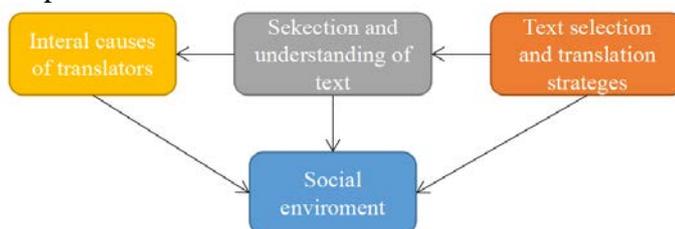


Fig.1. Overview model

Due to the different cultural backgrounds of different languages, the communicative intentions implied in the information provided by explicit means in the original language are often not recognized because of the cognitive differences of the target language readers with different cultural backgrounds. The current situation of corpus research is that most of the corpus built by us are in the hands of a few corpus developers and researchers. Even if a few of them provide online indexing, they can not meet the needs of research because of their single functions. The root cause of erroneous translation lies in the translator's lack of understanding of Chinese traditional culture. In order to translate TCM terminology correctly, we must start with the cultural background and source of the emergence and evolution of TCM terminology, and truly grasp its cultural connotation and essence. If no corresponding cultural background knowledge exists in the translated culture, it will lead to cultural communication barriers [9]. Chinese literary works are naturally aimed at the local readers. The omission of some common cultural phenomena in the works will not affect Chinese readers' understanding of the works. When establishing the necessary semantic coherence and context for understanding the source language, the reader cannot connect the information in the text with the knowledge and experience outside the text, which may lead to a meaning vacuum and cause obstacles to understanding.

## **2.2 Cultural default Compensation Principle from the Perspective of Reception Theory**

TCM is the quintessence of China and was bred in the cradle of Chinese culture. As a part of China's unique culture, TCM itself is inextricably linked with China's human geography and traditional culture. An important reason for the slow development of English translation of TCM in the past few decades is that in order to maintain the characteristics of TCM, many translators have used various translation methods to create a large number of new words. This translation method can be used in the process of translating absolutely static cultural default. The translator should give the target readers a full understanding of the beauty and acceptance of the original language, and effectively grasp their own ideology, so as to make the corresponding translation strategy. If you ignore the compensation for the cultural default phenomenon or use inappropriate compensation methods during the translation process, it may lead to some translation problems. In the translation process, the translator not only needs to realize the language conversion, but also needs to reconstruct the default cultural content in the TCM classics, fill in the meaning gaps that the readers have in understanding, and accurately convey the semantics and culture contained in the TCM texts.

According to the principle of communication, communication parties in the same cultural context generally do not disclose all the information about their intentions, and the self-evident information of the two parties is often not explicitly stated, forming semantic implication. Cultural default is based on the cultural knowledge shared by the two parties in the source language communication, in the form of omission, and the omitted part is the cultural knowledge shared by the two parties in the communication. Translation has always been closely linked with culture. Translation activities are an important channel for cultural exchange and a necessary condition for the emergence of multiculturalism by spreading native culture and introducing foreign cultures through language and writing. TCM is a medical theory gradually established and developed through long-term clinical medical practice under the guidance of ancient Chinese philosophy and is the essence of Chinese culture [10]. When translating, translators should use the naturalization method as a stepping stone. At the same time, if possible, try to use the alienation method to maximize the essence of Chinese medicine. The translator should construct the translation term for the first time according to the initial construction method and keep it high normative, so that the same cultural default is consistent. Globalization has made the exchange of various cultures of various countries more and more frequent. Translators must achieve cross-cultural exchanges and reduce cultural shocks. The heterogeneity of national cultures must be highlighted.

## **3. Cultural Default and Translation Compensation**

According to the principle of cultural fidelity, medicine needs to fully convey deep culture on the basis of preserving the dynamic equivalence of surface culture. When the author and the reader have different cultural backgrounds, such as in the process of cross-cultural communication, cultural default becomes an obstacle to the reader's understanding. Since the existence of cultural default has an impact on cross-cultural communication, necessary measures should be taken to actively compensate for these default contents. The theoretical system of TCM has been formed as early as ancient China, so it has obvious Chinese national characteristics and is very different from the medical system of western medicine. If only transliteration or literal translation is carried out, it is not only difficult to accurately express the unique meaning of TCM terms, but also often leads to misunderstanding. When the surface cultural structure conflicts with the deep cultural integrity, the translator needs to give full attention to the best connection between the surface culture and the deep culture and strictly follow the dynamics of contextual adaptation in the process. For the compensation of cultural default, it is necessary to have a good grasp of a standard, which can neither compensate for the insufficiency nor compensate for the excess. This should be based on the translator's full understanding of the target language readers. When translating the words of some foreign things, people often use transliteration to translate them, either because the translator is not completely sure of the translated content, or because the readers are unfamiliar with these new things, or because there are no equivalent words in Chinese. Assimilation shows the process of the

subject transforming the object, while adaptation shows the process of the subject transforming under the action of the object. In this way, it is beneficial to observe and assist the design simulation of TCM terminology translation in different directions. Table 1 shows the experimental data.

Table 1 Time domain values and algorithm simulation parameters

Time domain value	Algorithmic simulation parameters
537.54	357.62
651.23	325.84
418.54	432.59
521.56	370.66
542.67	278.76

To establish an English translation specification for TCM terminology, a theory should be used as its guiding principle. This theoretical principle should be cognitive schema theory because it is a theory that reveals people's cognitive characteristics. The statistical results of the index parameters evaluated by the translation are studied, and data clustering and information fusion processing are performed. Table 2 is the test result of the indicator.

Table 2 Evaluation test data

Stage	1	2	3	4	5	6
Frequency	51.52	87.65	85.82	68.45	62.24	42.65
Accuracy	81.36	78.47	76.05	78.64	87.51	68.43

A considerable part of TCM terminology is the conclusion and general name that people have observed and experienced some diseases for thousands of years, which makes TCM concise, vivid and neat in language description. There are different degrees of cultural connotation between Chinese and western languages. The richer the culture, the more obvious the hidden degree of the language text. Many Chinese writers like to use flowery and lyrical words, while English is more accustomed to objective and low-key statements of facts. In order to effectively avoid confusion of concepts caused by over-translation, redundant culture can be omitted directly. There are many words in any language that reflect the unique things, thoughts and ideas of the nation, and it is difficult to find corresponding words in other languages. If the translator uses literal translation in the translation process to let the target readers find out the cultural default meaning from the context and omit the explanation of its Abstract function, the phenomenon of communication barriers caused by lengthy articles can be effectively avoided.

The theoretical system of TCM is developed on the basis of Chinese classical philosophical theory, and is full of philosophical thinking and understanding of all things in the universe. Therefore, a large number of terminology with strong philosophical color has entered TCM. Cultural default exists in the communication between the author and native language readers. The sharing of cultural background knowledge is voluntarily omitted, and the shared cultural background knowledge implicitly exists in the text, resulting in an understanding vacancy and meaning vacuum for foreign language readers. A translator's erroneous estimation of the shared knowledge background of the target readers may also lead to over-translation, i.e. the amount of information contained in the target text is far greater than that of the original text, which is an over-translation. Translators should not apply this method too much. Only in this way can the phenomenon of missing part of the default culture be effectively avoided. In the process of translating TCM, translators have encountered many cultural-related problems, of which cultural default is one. For Chinese medicine terms with Abstract meaning and extensive use, transliteration can be used if literal translation or free translation cannot accurately express meaning and culture.

#### 4. Conclusion

TCM translation, as a bridge of the Western transmission of TCM, plays an extremely important role in the process of successful transmission of TCM to the west. Although there are still many

problems in the process of English translation, with the continuous strengthening of cultural exchanges between China and the West, Western readers are more and more familiar with traditional Chinese culture and TCM culture, and the terminology and translation of TCM are gradually recognized and accepted by Western readers. In the process of the international dissemination of TCM, English translation of TCM terminology is indispensable. The first problem to be solved when Chinese medicine goes to the world is the translation of Chinese medicine. Inner Canon of the Yellow Emperor is complex and ambiguous, so it is difficult to have a thorough understanding of the article to a certain extent. In this case, it is inevitable to have a biased understanding. Although Chinese medicine is a science, it has strong cultural characteristics. Language is the carrier of culture, and translation is not only the transformation of language, but also the transmission of culture. Chinese-English translators of TCM should overcome the cultural differences between Chinese and English at a deep level, and scientifically explore the way closest to the artistic effect of the source language to convey the meaning and cultural information contained in the source language, so as to effectively realize the compensation and reconstruction of cultural default.

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