Proceedings of ICIHCS 2026 Symposium: Alternate Narratives and Cross-Cultural Visions in a Globalized World
DOI: 10.54254/2753-7064/2026.HT38504

A Study of the English Translation Strategies of Chinese Culture-Loaded Words from the Perspective of the "Three-Dimensional Transformation" of Eco-translatology: A Case Study of Festive China

Zhujia Xu

English Department, China Foreign Affairs University, Beijing, China
joycezhujia@sina.com

Abstract. As the strategy of Chinese culture "going out" continues to advance in depth, traditional festivals, which carry the national spirit and the connotations of folk customs, have become a key link in the international communication of excellent traditional Chinese culture, and the translation quality of the narration of their documentaries bears on whether the corresponding cultural connotations can be effectively communicated. However, the culture-loaded words in the narration of cultural documentaries are dense in number and deep in connotation, and they have become a major difficulty in English translation. Taking Hu Gengshen's "three-dimensional transformation" theory of Eco-Translatology as its theoretical framework and the narration of the cultural documentary series Festive China produced by China Daily as its object of study, this paper studies the English translation strategies for the culture-loaded words of traditional festivals from the three dimensions of the linguistic, the cultural and the communicative. The study finds that: in the linguistic dimension, the translator mostly uses a combination of literal translation and free translation, taking into account both the features of the cultural words and the expression habits of English; in the cultural dimension, the basic cultural connotations are effectively transmitted and the folk images are retained to the greatest extent; in the communicative dimension, attention is paid to the acceptability of the information in the translated text, and the communicative intention is often realized through explanatory translation, lowering the threshold of understanding for overseas audiences. This paper provides a reference model of strategies for the translation practice of culture-loaded words in texts for external communication, and has reference value for promoting the international communication of the culture of Chinese traditional festivals.

Keywords: culture-loaded words, Eco-Translatology, Festive China, English translation strategies, cultural external communication

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DOI: 10.54254/2753-7064/2026.HT38504

1. Introduction

Under the background of the times in which the strategy of Chinese culture "going out" is constantly advancing in depth, telling China's stories well to the outside and spreading excellent traditional Chinese culture have become one of the important paths for raising the country's cultural soft power. Traditional festivals carry the value concepts, folk rites and life wisdom unique to the Chinese nation, and are an important carrier of the international communication of culture. As an intuitive and vivid medium of external communication, the cultural documentary is one of the important ways for overseas audiences to understand Chinese traditional festivals; its narration contains a large number of culture-loaded words that carry local folk customs and images. Such words are rooted in the specific historical and cultural context of China and contain rich national cultural meanings, and whether their cultural connotations can be accurately received and understood by overseas audiences is closely bound up with the quality of their English translation. Yet because of the cultural differences between Chinese and English, some culture-loaded words easily fall into translation predicaments such as loss of image, distortion of connotation and obstacles to audience understanding; how to take into account linguistic expression, cultural transmission and the effect of cross-cultural communication has become a real problem that the practice of translation for external communication urgently needs to solve.

At present, research in the scholarly community on the field of Eco-Translatology has already produced fairly rich results. Sun Lin and Han Caihong take the science-fiction work *Beijing Folded* as their object of study, discuss the path of handling culture-loaded words under the "adaptation-selection" mechanism of Eco-Translatology, and confirm that the three-dimensional transformation framework has a strong explanatory power for the English translation of Chinese characteristic words [1]. Wang Lisong and Hu Mingran, based on Eco-Translatology, analyze the translation of traditional cultural elements from the three dimensions of the linguistic, the cultural and the communicative, and point out that cultural vacancy and excessive domestication are prominent difficulties in English translation, and that the translator needs, through three-dimensional adaptive selection and transformation, to balance the retention of source-language culture with the acceptance of target-language readers [2]. Zhu Jingyan uses the three-dimensional transformation theory to analyze film and television subtitle translation, and proposes that subtitle translation is constrained by media conditions and that translation choices have to take into account cultural features, linguistic form and communicative intention, providing a reference for the translation of texts for external communication [3]. Huang Rui and Hu Gengshen expand the practical boundary of Eco-Translatology, introduce green translation and the "ten transformations" translation method into new-media translation for external communication, and stress that translation for external communication should attach importance to media ecology, audience cognition and actual communication effect [4]. Liang Lei, with regard to the translation for external communication of public signs, proposes that the translator should flexibly choose translation means in light of the communication scene, so as to realize the effective output of cross-cultural information [5].

A comprehensive review of the existing research shows that the three-dimensional transformation theory applies to culture-loaded words, film and television subtitles and new-media translation for external communication, but the existing research mostly uses literary novels, theatrical films and social media posts as its corpus, while research that is specifically aimed at festival documentaries for overseas communication and that systematically analyzes the English translation of festival culture-loaded words from the three dimensions of the linguistic, the cultural and the communicative is relatively limited, and discussion of the relation of mutual coordination and

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mutual constraint among the three dimensions is relatively scarce, which leaves room for discussion for this study. On this basis, this paper takes Hu Gengshen's "three-dimensional transformation" theory of Eco-Translatology as its theoretical framework, selects the narration of the documentary for external communication *Festive China* produced by China Daily as its object of study, and focuses on the culture-loaded words of traditional festivals in the text to carry out its analysis. This series of short films has twelve episodes in all; each episode revolves around one Chinese traditional festival or solar term, and combines live scenes and animation to introduce the origin, folk customs and cultural connotations of the festival.

Eco-Translatology is a local translation research paradigm founded by the Chinese scholar Hu Gengshen in 2001. This theory "borrows the basic principles and ideas of the 'adaptation/selection' doctrine in Darwin's theory of biological evolution", regards translation as the adaptive selection activity of the translator in the translation eco-environment, and carries out its analysis relying on the three-dimensional transformation of the linguistic, the cultural and the communicative; it helps to grasp in a three-dimensional way the multiple goals of translation for external communication, and to coordinate the balance between cultural transmission and reader acceptance. This paradigm "takes ecological holism as its idea, oriental ecological wisdom as its reliance, and the 'adaptation/selection' theory as its cornerstone; it systematically explores the translation ecology, the text ecology and the 'translation community' ecology and their mutual effects and mutual relations, and devotes itself to a comprehensive survey and description of the whole of the translation ecology and the noumenon of translation theory from an ecological perspective" [6]. This paper tries to explore: in the English translation practice of this documentary, how does the translator accomplish the three-dimensional adaptive transformation? What English translation strategies are adopted for the festival culture-loaded words? How do the three dimensions coordinate with and constrain each other? This paper will in turn carry out its analysis from the translation handling of words and syntax in the linguistic dimension, the retention of images and the compensation strategies for cultural vacancy in the cultural dimension, and the audience acceptance and the three-dimensional coordination pattern in the communicative dimension, and finally draw the research conclusions and provide enlightenment for the translation of documentaries for external communication of the same kind.

2. Analysis of adaptive transformation in the linguistic dimension

Adaptive transformation in the linguistic dimension is the translator's making of adaptive selection and transformation with regard to the linguistic form of the source language in the translation eco-environment; it is mainly manifested at the two levels of word choice and syntactic structure. Chinese and English belong to different language systems, and there are obvious differences in the connotation of words, the habits of word formation and the logic of syntax. In the documentary *Festive China* as a narration text for external communication, the translator needs to adjust the Chinese culture-loaded words at the levels of words and syntax, and, on the premise of retaining the features of the source text to the greatest extent, to adapt to the norms of English linguistic expression. This part will carry out its analysis from the two subsections of word choice and the adjustment and restructuring of syntactic structure.

2.1. Choice of words

Words are the most basic carrier of cultural connotations; festival culture-loaded words refer to many concepts specific to festivals, covering such categories as folk objects, seasonal food and

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traditional customs. For example, the seasonal food "zongzi", the folk object "huadeng" and the traditional custom "tiechunlian" are all typical festival culture-loaded words. The translator-centered theory of the translation process put forward by Eco-Translatology stresses the alternating activity of the translator's adaptive selection and selective adaptation; it is a summing up and improvement of the experience and lessons of the source-text center and the target-text center, and also a correction of that one-sided translation theory research which sees only the "text" and not the "person" [7]. The translator needs, based on the whole translation eco-environment, to carry out multi-dimensional weighing and choosing, and to coordinate the balance between the cultural traits of the source language and the expression habits of the target language. Literal translation, transliteration and free translation are three commonly used means of handling culture-specific concepts in translation practice: literal translation retains the outer form of the source language; transliteration is mostly used to handle proper nouns that are vacant in the target culture; free translation puts weight on transmitting the substance of the concept and does not stick to the literal form. Under the communication ecology of documentaries for external communication, a single translation method often finds it hard to take into account both the goal of cultural output and the acceptance effect of overseas audiences, and the combined use of multiple strategies becomes the realistic choice of the translator. In the translated text of *Festive China*, one can see that the translator adopts differentiated handling with regard to different types of culture-loaded words. For example, "hongbao" is translated as "red envelopes, or hongbao" (Episode 11: Spring Festival), adopting the way of literal translation and transliteration running in parallel. Red envelopes start from the outward appearance of the object and help overseas readers quickly get to know the thing "hongbao", while the added transliteration hongbao retains the Chinese culture-specific symbol. The folk connotation of praying for blessing and taking in good fortune carried by "hongbao" cannot be completely transmitted by literal translation alone; the transliterated form, as Chinese culture spreads outward, is gradually recognized overseas, and the coexistence of the two expressions takes into account both present understanding and the output of the cultural concept.

As for "qingtuan", a seasonal food of the Jiangnan region that is uncommon in English culture, the translated text handles it as "Qingtuan, which literally means green bulb, was originally an offering for ancestors during Qingming" (Episode 3: Clear and Bright). The translator retains the proper noun by transliteration, and at the same time adds a short attributive clause to supplement the literal explanation. If one does transliteration only, overseas audiences will feel at a loss about the attributes of the thing. But if one does free translation only, the unique cultural noun will be lost; the way of transliteration matched with explanation accomplishes the two-way adaptation at the linguistic level.

In the face of folk activities for which an internationally common translation has already been formed, the translated text gives priority to literal translation. "Longzhoudasai" is translated as "dragon boat race" (Episode 5: Dragon Boat Festival); corresponding concepts for both "long" and "chuan" exist in English, this translation has already solidified into an internationally common expression, and it retains the outer form of the folk activity without adding to the burden of reading. And when handling sayings that carry Chinese rhetoric, the translated text usually chooses the strategy of free translation. For example, “小暑大暑，上蒸下煮” does not copy the figurative rhetoric, and is translated as "Minor Heat, Major Heat, drenched in sweat" (Episode 4: Summer). "Xiaoshu" and "dashu" adopt the internationally current literal translation "Minor Heat, Major Heat", while "shangzhengxiazhu" is an exaggerated metaphor specific to Chinese; if it is translated literally in a mechanical way, it may make the English expression hard to understand. Therefore, the translator gives up the rhetoric and retains the core meaning of sweltering summer heat.

DOI: 10.54254/2753-7064/2026.HT38504

Putting the above cases together, one can find that the adaptive selection of the translator at the level of words has a clear pattern: words of the folk-activity type give priority to the literal translation already accepted internationally; for the proper nouns of food and folk customs that foreign cultures lack, transliteration is mostly adopted, matched with literal translation or explanation as a supplement; rhetorical sayings, through free translation, strip off the rhetorical shell and preserve the core meaning. Transformation at the level of words takes conforming to the norms of English vocabulary as its basis, retains the features of the source-language words as far as possible, and lays a linguistic foundation for the further transmission of cultural connotations.

2.2. Adjustment and restructuring of syntactic structure

Chinese and English belong to different language types; Chinese has many run-on short sentences and realizes parataxis by relying on meaning, while English realizes hypotaxis by relying on grammatical means such as conjunctions, participles and clauses. Adaptive transformation at the syntactic level is the translator's facing up to the syntactic differences of the two kinds of language, and, through such means as adjustment of word order, addition and deletion of elements, conversion of parts of speech and restructuring of sentence patterns, transforming the Chinese run-on sentence pattern into a translated text that conforms to English grammar and fits the auditory communication features of the documentary.

Example 1：每逢冬至，皇帝便到天坛举行祭天大典，祈求来年风调雨顺，国泰民安。

Every year at Winter Solstice, emperors of the Ming and Qing dynasties (1368-1912) would go to the Temple of Heaven to hold a ceremony to worship Heaven, praying for good weather for their crops, and peace and prosperity for the country. (Episode 1: 24 Solar Terms)

The original sentence is a typical Chinese run-on sentence; it lays out in succession a series of actions — "go to the Temple of Heaven", "hold a ceremony to worship Heaven", "pray for blessings" — and there is no explicit grammatical marker between the clauses. The worship of Heaven is a state sacrificial rite specific to the Ming and Qing dynasties, rooted in the demands of ancient agricultural society regarding the timing of heaven and the work of farming; "fengtiaoyushun" in the Chinese context already contains the extended meaning of a bumper harvest of crops. This cultural connotation is well known to native Chinese readers, but is a blind spot in the cognition of overseas audiences. In syntactic handling, the translator turns “祈求来年风调雨顺，国泰民安” into an accompanying adverbial introduced by the present participle 'praying for', integrates the multiple parallel actions into the same main-clause frame, and restructures it into an English main-subordinate structure with clear layers, fitting the communication feature of auditory reception of the documentary.

Example 2：清明既是中国传统节气，又是中国人追思亲人的传统节日。

Qingming is not only one of China's 24 solar terms, but also an occasion for Chinese people to honor their lost family members. (Episode 3: Clear and Bright)

Qingming has the dual attribute of a natural solar term and a humane festival; it is a cultural concept unique to China. The Chinese original is made up of two short sentences, and the coordinate relation is transmitted implicitly by means of meaning. The translator chooses 'not only…but also…' to build an explicit coordinate compound sentence, turning the coordinate logic implicit in Chinese into the formal cohesion of English; at the same time, following the tendency of English toward nominalized expression, the translator converts the verbal concept "honor their lost family members" into a postposed infinitive element modifying the noun 'occasion'. Through the adjustment of syntactic form, the translated text clearly highlights the dual cultural connotation of

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Qingming as both a solar term and a festival, making it easy for overseas audiences to grasp the compound attribute of this cultural symbol.

Example 3：相传在远古时代，有一种怪兽叫“年”，每逢新旧岁之交，便出来危害人间。

Legend has it that in remote antiquity there was a monster called "Nian", who would come out and harm the world by the end of each lunar year. (Episode 11: Spring Festival)

This sentence comes from the folk oral narrative that explains the origin of the Spring Festival; the Chinese adopts a paratactic narrative, splitting the person, the time and the event into several short sentences, and each clause is held together only by meaning. The translator introduces a non-restrictive attributive clause, and by means of the relative pronoun 'who' establishes a grammatical binding between the antecedent "Nian" and the following action, integrating the fragmented Chinese short sentences into a main-subordinate compound sentence. By adding hypotactic ties, the translator clarifies the logical relation between the narrative subject and the action, conforms to the norms of English syntax, and lowers the cognitive burden on overseas audiences in interpreting the narrative chain of the folk story.

On the whole, adaptive transformation in the syntactic dimension is accomplished mainly by such means as adding words to supplement background, adding clauses and conjunctions to make logic explicit, and converting parts of speech. The translator fully attends to the linguistic difference between Chinese parataxis and English hypotaxis, restructures the Chinese run-on sentence into a sentence pattern that conforms to the grammatical logic of English, and at the same time takes into account the media attribute of the documentary narration, guaranteeing that the translated text is concise and fluent, and completing the adaptive selection at the level of linguistic form.

3. Analysis of adaptive transformation in the cultural dimension

Adaptive transformation in the cultural dimension requires the translator to step out of the mere conversion of linguistic signs and to attend to the differences between the two bilingual cultural systems. *Festive China*, as a text of cultural communication to the outside, on the one hand needs to preserve as far as possible the cultural images unique to Chinese traditional festivals, and on the other hand has to face directly the phenomenon of cultural vacancy that exists widely between Chinese and English. Cultural connotations carry the core value of festival communication; balancing the retention of cultural images with the adaptation to cultural vacancy can fully release the cultural communication efficacy of translation to the outside. This section carries out its analysis respectively from the two angles of the transmission and retention of cultural connotations and the compensation for and adaptation to cultural vacancy.

3.1. Transmission and retention of cultural connotations

In the practice of translation for external communication, if one leans one-sidedly toward the expression habits of the target language, it is easy to dissolve the cultural images unique to the source language and to damage the effect of the outward communication of local culture. The "ten transformations" translation method of Eco-Translatology proposes that "source-oriented translation puts weight on translation that adapts to the linguistic form, cultural connotation and style of writing of the source-language ecosystem" [8]. With regard to the mythological figures, folk activities and proper local objects unique to Chinese, the translator can, by means of a source-oriented orientation, retain the cultural traits; and for concepts with a high threshold of audience cognition, the translator can combine target-complementing translation, which "puts weight on translation that complements and builds the ecological environment factors of the target language, makes up the missing 'life

DOI: 10.54254/2753-7064/2026.HT38504

elements' of the text, and increases the amount of target-language text" [8], adding short supplementary information, and controlling the burden of reader understanding while retaining the cultural core.

Mythological figures are culture-loaded words of a highly representative kind in Chinese festival texts. This kind of unique mythological image lacks a corresponding reference in the target-language culture, and in the process of translation problems such as the alienation of the image and the loss of local cultural traits easily appear. In Episode 8, Mid-Autumn Festival, of *Festive China*, the translated text directly transliterates "chang'e" as Chang'e. Chang'e is a mythological image native to China; no equivalent figure exists in English culture, and the translator has not replaced it with a foreign image from Western mythology. Along with the international communication of the Chang'e lunar exploration project, Chang'e has already gained a certain basis of overseas recognition; the transliteration strategy completely retains the local mythological image and helps the outward output of Chinese mythological culture.

Example 4：祭灶神、贴春联

Worship the Kitchen God, put up Spring Festival couplets (blessing words posted on door frames). (Episode 11: Spring Festival)

Both Kitchen God and Spring Festival couplets are folk symbols unique to the Chinese Spring Festival, and have no ready-made corresponding concept in the target-language culture. Kitchen God is the folk god who protects the home; it symbolizes the expectation of the people for the peace of the whole family and for ample clothing and food. Spring Festival couplets, as a marker of the new year festival, symbolizes seeing off the old and welcoming the new, and carries the beautiful prayer of the masses to move toward good fortune and take in blessing. The translator gives priority to literal translation, retaining the original cultural form of the folk symbol; then, by means of a short annotation embedded in parentheses, the translator explains to overseas audiences the carrier and the basic function of Spring Festival couplets. This strategy takes into account both the retention of the cultural image and the readability of the translated text; it neither weakens the local folk traits nor fails to help overseas audiences who lack the relevant life experience to quickly grasp the connotation of the symbol.

Example 5： 三潭印月

Three Pools Mirroring the Moon. (Episode 8: Mid-Autumn Festival)

"Three Pools Mirroring the Moon" is the place name of a classic Mid-Autumn moon-viewing landscape, and in itself carries the literary and aesthetic connotation of depicting scenery and describing objects. The translated text chooses the strategy of literal translation, restores the pictorial image on the literal surface of the name, completely transmits the cultural and aesthetic value specific to this Mid-Autumn landmark, and has not made simplification or rewriting in order to cater to the habits of the target language. Literal translation retains the literariness of the place name, but this translation lacks additional explanation; for overseas audiences who have no understanding at all of the cultural background of the West Lake in Hangzhou, it is impossible to know from the translated text alone that this place is a famous site for viewing the moon at Mid-Autumn, and there is a certain threshold of understanding.

As can be seen from the above translation examples, with regard to culture-loaded words of the mythological-figure, folk-activity and characteristic-landscape types, the translator gives priority to the translation strategies of transliteration and literal translation, adds short explanations when necessary, tries as far as possible to avoid assimilative replacement by Western cultural concepts, preserves to the maximum extent the cultural images unique to Chinese traditional festivals, and completes the adaptation to the source-language cultural ecology.

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3.2. Compensation for and adaptation to cultural vacancy

Cultural vacancy refers to the customs, concepts and images that exist in the source language but have no corresponding prototype in the culture of the target language. "The model of the translation noumenon ecosystem shows that the source text and its translation eco-environment constitute one text ecosystem, and the translated text and its translation eco-environment constitute another text ecosystem. The two text ecosystems are linked in two directions through the translator's selective adaptation and adaptive selection at the stage of the translating event, and this process is the process of text transplantation." [9] There is by nature a difference between the two sets of text ecosystems, and the translator needs to make adaptive selection and adopt suitable translation means to bridge the gap of cross-cultural cognition.

Example 6：除守岁以外，吃年夜饭和看春晚也是中国人在春节的两项重要习俗。

In addition to staying up late on New Year's Eve, having a New Year's Eve dinner and watching the Spring Festival Gala are two important customs of Spring Festival. (Episode 11: Spring Festival)

"Stay up late on New Year's Eve" is a folk behavior of the seasonal hour unique to the Spring Festival; no equivalent social custom exists inside English culture, and a cultural vacancy is formed. This folk behavior puts weight on describing the practical activity of staying up on New Year's Eve to see off the old and welcome the new; it has no widely spread, conventionally established fixed proper translated name, and if it is transliterated directly, overseas audiences have no way of learning the connotation of the behavior. Therefore the translator gives up the path of transliteration and adopts descriptive free translation, using "staying up late on New Year's Eve" to plainly sum up the behavioral feature of staying up late on New Year's Eve, enabling overseas audiences to quickly grasp the actual referent of this folk custom, making up the obstacle to understanding caused by cultural vacancy, and fitting the communication feature of the instantaneous auditory reception of the documentary.

Example 7：（南方年夜饭吃鱼）年年有余

Because fish in Chinese sounds similar to the character for prosperity, symbolizing an abundant and comfortable life. (Episode 11: Spring Festival)

Chinese homophonic rhetoric belongs to the language-dependent type of cultural phenomenon; the auspicious meaning of "niannianyouyu" is built on the basis of the phonetic closeness of the Chinese "鱼" and "余", while the English language system cannot reproduce this pragmatic rhetoric, and the rhetorical form itself constitutes a cross-cultural cultural vacancy. The translator has not mechanically reproduced the linguistic form of the homophony, but adopts explanatory translation, steps out of the pursuit of equivalence at the phonetic level, directly explains the cultural meaning of symbolizing abundance and peace behind this custom, and completes the transmission of the cultural connotation by way of information compensation. This handling gives up the rhetorical shell, gives priority to guaranteeing the effective output of the core cultural meaning, and fits the popular-science positioning of the documentary toward ordinary overseas audiences.

Example 8：南方则吃汤圆

Their southern counterparts consume rice dumplings instead. (Episode 10: Winter)

"Rice dumpling" is a signature seasonal food of the Winter Solstice; it belongs to the material type of culture-loaded word, and no completely equivalent food concept exists in English, forming a cultural vacancy at the level of things. The translator chooses descriptive free translation, using "rice dumplings" to point out its food attribute as a product of glutinous rice, and builds a basic cognition for overseas audiences who are not familiar with this food. This translation does not dig into the cultural extended meaning of reunion carried by "rice dumplings"; it only completes the conceptual

DOI: 10.54254/2753-7064/2026.HT38504

transference of the thing itself, leaves the interpretation of the cultural meaning to the context, and, within the limited duration of the documentary, gives priority to guaranteeing the effective transmission of the basic information.

It can be seen from this that adaptive transformation in the cultural dimension presents a two-way feature: on the one hand, it retains local cultural images as far as possible and completes the outward output of Chinese culture; on the other hand, it carries out information compensation with regard to cultural vacancy and lowers the threshold of understanding for overseas audiences, and by this realizes the balance between the source-language cultural ecology and the target-language cultural ecology.

4. Analysis of adaptive transformation in the communicative dimension

Adaptive transformation in the communicative dimension refers to the translator's going beyond the levels of linguistic form and cultural sign, focusing on the realization of the cross-cultural communicative intention, attending to the communication effect of the translated text and the actual degree of acceptance of overseas audiences, and striving to transmit accurately to the target readers the folk emotions and value concepts behind the festivals. The documentary, as an audiovisual carrier of external communication, requires the translated text to take into account the spoken auditory experience and to avoid barriers to understanding; it has both to preserve the communicative purpose of the source language as far as possible and to face squarely the real problem of the loss of semantic and ritual connotation in the translation of some culture-loaded words. At the same time, the linguistic dimension, the cultural dimension and the communicative dimension are not independent of each other; they coordinate with and constrain each other, and the translation choices of the translator are often the adaptive result under the joint weighing of the three dimensions. The systematic view of Eco-Translatology is a composite "systematic overview". It clearly states: "to carry out systematic and holistic research of comprehensive survey with the holistic view of ecology as its methodology is both the main research content of Eco-Translatology and the main research method of Eco-Translatology" [10].

4.1. Communicative effect and information acceptability

The core of transformation in the communicative dimension is to realize the communicative intention of communication to the outside, and to examine whether the translated text can let overseas audiences read and understand the customary behaviors and grasp the emotional meanings carried by the festivals, avoiding such problems as obscurity of the translated text, dislocation of information and loss of cultural connotation. In the face of different types of culture-loaded words, the translator flexibly chooses such means as explanatory translation and descriptive translation according to the communicative goal, lowering the threshold of cognition; but for some words that carry traditional rites and meanings specific to Chinese, there will be a partial loss of connotation, causing a partial simplification of the communicative intention.

Example 9：民俗观念中，“九”是数字中的最大数，它和中文的“久”同音，有长久长寿的含意。

In Chinese folklore, the number nine is the largest number, it's a homonym to the Chinese word jiu, which contains the auspicious meaning of "a long and healthy life". (Episode 9: Chongyang Festival)

This sentence comes from Episode 9, Chongyang Festival, of *Festive China*; the homophony of "九" and "久" is a linguistic and cultural phenomenon unique to Chinese. Limited by the English

DOI: 10.54254/2753-7064/2026.HT38504

language system, the translated text finds it hard to reproduce the homophonic rhetoric of Chinese characters; and since the documentary is aimed at ordinary overseas audiences and needs to give priority to guaranteeing that the information can be understood immediately, the translator chooses to give up the homophonic effect in form, and instead directly points out the homophonic relation and the auspicious meaning of "a long and healthy life". This handling can quickly break down the language barrier, letting overseas audiences who do not understand Chinese homophonic culture grasp the cultural root of respecting the aged and praying for longevity at the Chongyang Festival, and fits the communication feature of the instantaneous auditory reception of the documentary. But the translated text cannot reproduce the verbal interest that the homophony of Chinese characters carries in itself; it transmits only the practical meaning, causing a partial lack of communicative information at the aesthetic level.

Example 10：古时重阳节有登高祈福、饮宴求寿的习俗。

In ancient times, it was customary to climb mountains to pray for good luck and longevity on the Double Ninth Festival. (Episode 9: Chongyang Festival)

In this sentence, "climb mountains to pray for good luck" belongs to a folk behavior unique to China, and no equivalent custom exists in English culture. The translator adopts explanatory translation, directly adding "to pray for good luck and longevity" to point out the communicative purpose of praying for blessing and longevity behind climbing mountains, binding the folk behavior together with the spiritual demand. If one translates only "climb mountains", overseas audiences will mistakenly think it is just ordinary mountain climbing for pleasure; this translation helps the audience read and understand the spiritual sustenance behind the folk custom, and smoothly completes the transmission of the communicative information.

Example 11：中国古代，女性会访闺中密友，拜祭织女，祈求能够像织女一样心灵手巧，收获忠贞的爱情。

In ancient China, women would visit their close friends and worship the Weaver Girl on the seventh day of the seventh lunar month praying they could become as clever as the Weaver Girl and find their faithful lover. (Episode 6: Qixi Festival)

In the source text, "qiqiao" is a condensed festival culture-loaded concept, containing the special spiritual demands and social customs of ancient women. The translated text does not use transliteration, but takes apart and converts the abstract folk concept into descriptions of behavior and wish that can be understood by overseas readers. This handling guarantees that the basic communicative information gets through, but the social and cultural connotation implied in the original — that ancient women were bound by their times — is weakened, and a selective choice of the communicative information appears.

Example 12：元宵节素有热闹喜庆的观灯习俗。

It is customary to appreciate the beauty of lanterns at night during Lantern Festival. (Episode 12: Lantern Festival)

"Appreciate the beauty of lanterns" is not just the simple action of viewing decorative lanterns; behind it, it carries the connotation of the collective carnival of the masses playing and taking pleasure at the new year and praying for blessing and taking in good fortune. The translated text "appreciate the beauty of lanterns" puts weight on restoring the viewing behavior itself, guaranteeing that overseas audiences receive the basic factual information, but it plays down the social atmosphere of the whole-people play and carnival of the traditional lantern festival, showing the simplifying handling that the documentary narration translation does to the deep communicative meaning in order to pursue conciseness.

DOI: 10.54254/2753-7064/2026.HT38504

Overall, in order to fit the communication feature of the immediate listening of the documentary, the translator gives priority to guaranteeing that the core communicative information gets through; for the rite-type culture-loaded words that are complex and rich in levels, the translator often gives priority to preserving the main meaning, and some deep-level rite and social-cultural connotations will be lost to a certain degree. This is also a real constraint that audiovisual translation for external communication has to face.

4.2. The pattern of mutual coordination of the three dimensions

"The translator is responsible for coordinating and balancing the mutual relations among the 'translation community' (the person), the 'translation environment' (the environment) and the 'translation text' (the text), and bears responsibility toward the 'other'." [11] The three-dimensional transformation of Eco-Translatology is a relation of linked co-existence in translation practice; every translation decision of the translator is the result of a comprehensive adaptation to the triple eco-environment of the linguistic, the cultural and the communicative, and among the three dimensions there is both coordinated gain and mutual constraint and trade-off.

Example 13：相传远古时期，天上有十个太阳同时出现，暴晒和高温使得民不聊生。有一名叫后羿的英雄出现，射下了九个太阳，拯救了世界。

According to the legend, in ancient times there were ten suns in the sky simultaneously and the strong exposure and extremely hot temperature made people's lives a misery. A hero named Houyi came along, shot down nine suns and saved the world. (Episode 8: Mid-Autumn Festival)

At the level of the linguistic dimension, the translator restructures the Chinese run-on narrative short sentences and uses coordinate compound sentences, conforming to the hypotactic expression habits of English, and the rhythm of the sentences fits the voice-over of the documentary; at the level of the cultural dimension, the translator directly adopts the transliteration 'Houyi' to retain the name of the Chinese mythological figure, does not apply Western mythological figures to make a domesticating replacement, and retains the local mythological image; at the level of the communicative dimension, the translator completely retells the core story plot of "Houyi shooting down suns", and prepares the narrative groundwork for the later legend of "Chang'e flying to the moon". This case realizes the coordination of the three dimensions of the linguistic, the cultural and the communicative, taking into account sentence norms, cultural retention and the narrative communicative purpose.

Example 14：重阳糕则是重阳节的节令糕点，通常由面粉、红糖、果料等混合蒸制而成，象征“步步高升”的吉祥之意。

Chongyang cake is a festive cake for the Double Ninth Festival that is usually made of flour, brown sugar, fruits and nuts among other ingredients. It contains the auspicious meaning making steady progress. (Episode 9: Chongyang Festival)

The linguistic dimension adopts the combination of transliteration plus noun, building a sentence pattern that conforms to the norms of the English noun phrase; the cultural dimension retains the proper noun "Chongyang cake", holding on to the local object symbol; but limited by the medium of the duration of the documentary narration and the capacity of auditory information, the translated text cannot lay out the complete rites of the ancient sacrifice and banquet of "Chongyang cake", and can only briefly point out the auspicious meaning of "making steady progress". The communicative dimension transmits only the core meaning and cannot completely restore the whole set of folk functions; the depth of communication is constrained by the media conditions, which shows the constraint that the communicative dimension exerts on the information output of the cultural dimension.

DOI: 10.54254/2753-7064/2026.HT38504

Example 15：那一天，中国北方冬至要吃饺子，而南方则吃汤圆。

On that day, people in the north eat dumplings while their southern counterparts consume rice dumplings instead. (Episode 10: Winter)

The linguistic dimension chooses the conjunction "while" to build a contrastive sentence pattern, fitting the hypotactic feature of English, and the language is plain and short, suitable for auditory reception; the cultural dimension gives up the transliteration of "rice dumplings" and adopts the descriptive free translation "rice dumplings", dissolving the culture-specific noun symbol and making up the cultural vacancy of the target language; the communicative dimension clearly transmits the folk fact of the dietary difference between the north and the south at the Winter Solstice. In order to let overseas audiences quickly understand the difference in customs, the translator gives up part of the proper form of the cultural dimension, which directly shows the constraint that the communicative demand exerts on the translation strategy of the cultural dimension.

The logic of the interaction of the three can be summed up as follows: the linguistic dimension is the basic carrier, and all cultural connotations and communicative intentions must rely on the output of the linguistic form that conforms to the norms of the target language; the cultural dimension establishes the goal of cultural output and retains local images as far as possible; the communicative dimension is the point where the translation of documentaries for external communication lands, and, constrained by the audiovisual medium, it in turn constrains the scale of handling in the linguistic and cultural dimensions. When the three cannot be maximized at the same time, the translator takes the whole communication ecology as the measure and makes adaptive selection, completing the dynamic balance of the multiple goals.

5. Conclusion

Based on the "three-dimensional transformation" theory of Eco-Translatology, this paper takes the culture-loaded words of traditional festivals in the narration of the documentary for external communication *Festive China* as its object of analysis, and analyzes the adaptive selection behavior of the translator from the three dimensions of the linguistic, the cultural and the communicative. The study finds that, in the linguistic dimension, the translator, in view of the differences between the Chinese and English language systems, flexibly combines multiple translation means such as transliteration, literal translation and free translation, and at the same time restructures the Chinese run-on short sentences, completing the adaptive transformation at the levels of words and syntax, and making the translated text fit the norms of English expression and the auditory communication features of the documentary; in the cultural dimension, the translator takes into account both the source-oriented and the target-complementing translation strategies, retains local cultural images as far as possible for mythological figures and folk symbols, and, in the face of the cultural vacancy between Chinese and English, relies on explanatory and descriptive translation to complete information compensation, mediating the contradiction between the output of source-language culture and the cognition of target-language audiences; in the communicative dimension, the translated text takes the actual effect of cross-cultural communication as its point of landing, gives priority to guaranteeing that the core folk information gets through, but, constrained by the media capacity of the documentary, some homophonic meanings and the deep connotations behind traditional social customs will suffer a certain loss. The three dimensions of the linguistic, the cultural and the communicative are not cut off from each other; they present a dynamic relation of coordinated co-existence and mutual constraint: the linguistic dimension builds the bottom-level carrier of translation expression, the cultural dimension anchors the core goal of the outward output

DOI: 10.54254/2753-7064/2026.HT38504

of Chinese folk customs, and the communicative dimension, as the final value orientation of translation for external communication, limits in the reverse direction the scale of the output of linguistic form and cultural information. The translator needs to seek the dynamic balance of the whole translation ecology in the game among the three dimensions.

In the practice of translation for external communication, the translator of festival documentaries should stand on the communication ecology of the audiovisual medium, weigh cultural fidelity against audience acceptance, avoid excessive domestication that dissolves the folk traits, and also not pile up obscure proper names that raise the threshold of understanding. The analytical thinking and the case summary of this paper can provide a reference for the English translation of culture-loaded words in cultural documentaries and short videos for external communication of the same type, and help the folk culture of Chinese traditional festivals to realize a smoother and more efficient cross-cultural communication.

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