

## Study on the English Translation of Traditional Practical Handicrafts in Guangxi

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### Abstract

Guangxi traditional practical handicrafts are one of the representatives of Guangxi culture and Chinese traditional culture. Actively practicing the construction plan of "The Belt and Road Initiative", the English translation of Guangxi traditional handicrafts can promote the cultural exchange and cultural "go global" of Guangxi, and contribute to the local cultural tourism industry. Guided by the translation model of the Adaptation Theory, the article discusses the adaptation in the process of English translation of the introductory texts of Guangxi Qinzhou Nixing pottery and Guangxi Horsehair Embroidery Baby-Carrying Strap of the Shui People. From the interpretation of the uses of Guangxi Horsehair Embroidery Baby-Carrying Strap to the production process of Guangxi Qinzhou Nixing pottery, the cultural characteristics of traditional handicrafts should be adapted to achieve the purpose of cultural communication.

### Keywords

Guangxi Traditional Practical Handicrafts; Cultural Transmission; Adaptation Model of Translation.

### 1. Introduction

In ancient China, there was no specific classification for crafts, but people called all handmade products 'Crafts'. However, as Chinese traditional culture continues to be passed down and developed, people have begun to refer to those handmade crafts with Chinese traditional culture as 'Traditional Crafts and Arts'. The government thus published Regulations on the Protection of Traditional Crafts and Arts in 1997 for crafts to develop with steady steps, these regulations were very important and considered as a turning point in the development of Chinese crafts' history. However, there were no significant differences between 'Crafts' and 'Arts', moreover, 'Crafts' was not an opposite term for 'Arts', but included all the skills and forms of the 'Arts'. 'Traditional Crafts and Arts' obviously have an epochal character. Compared with other kinds of crafts, hands must play an important role in the manufacturing process, not machines.

The most basic characteristic of practical traditional handicrafts is the combination of practicality and aesthetics. Practical handicrafts should be distinguished from ornamental handicrafts, which emphasize more on serving the society at large and combining practicality and aesthetics in one handicraft. Another important difference is that practical handicrafts can satisfy not only people's spiritual aesthetic needs, but also people's material aesthetic needs to a certain extent.

## 2. The Importance of English Translation of Traditional Practical Handicrafts in Guangxi

In March 2015, the National Development and Reform Commission, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Commerce jointly released the advocacy of the national "One Belt, One Road" construction plan, and Guangxi is an active participant, which provides Guangxi with an unprecedented opportunity for overseas communication. However, most foreign scholars are interested in the overseas dissemination of ancient Chinese traditional artworks, such as sculpture art, Chinese New Year paintings and Chinese garden architecture art. For example, Zhan Chaoqun (2009) analyzed the competitive advantages and disadvantages of China's traditional handicrafts in the international market, and put forward corresponding suggestions and measures for the optimization of their overseas marketing from the perspective of improving the added value of products and implementing brand strategies. Besides in marketing, the overseas communication of Chinese traditional handicrafts also focuses on the translation of traditional handicrafts. Liu Fang (2014) analyzed the problems in the cultural foreign communication of Hebei Xingtai handicrafts by introducing the current situation of this handicraft, and exploring its English translation strategy with the guidance of relevant translation theories. Liu Bei (2016) explores the influence of cultural factors such as language, history, religion and immateriality on translation in the foreign translation of Yangzhou crafts by giving examples and proposing corresponding translation strategies, pointing out that when translating cultural factors, alienation and naturalization strategies should be flexibly combined, following the principle of alienation as the main factor and naturalization as a supplement, to improve the influence of cultural penetration in foreign translations. The former explored the English translation of traditional handicrafts from the perspective of cross-cultural communication and applied relevant translation strategies, summarizing the characteristics of handicraft translation and specific translation strategies. However, the translation strategy it adopted lacks a certain degree of completeness and systematization. Whereas the latter only focused on cultural factors in the English translation exploration, and no English translation is made for the production methods or other information of Yangzhou traditional handicrafts, which lacks message integrity and convincingness in foreign publicity.

However, none of the above scholars has conducted a targeted study, i.e., a study on the English translation of traditional practical handicrafts in Guangxi in particular. The translation strategies applied to practical handicrafts are different from those of aesthetic handicrafts. In terms of usage function, the practical traditional handicrafts focus on their practical function, although with a certain aesthetic nature, but with more emphasis on the service to the society at large. Therefore, its introductory text is biased to introduce information on materials, techniques and uses of practical handicrafts.

However, aesthetic traditional handicrafts emphasize the aesthetic function, so their text introduces not only the relevant production techniques but also the cultural factors, and their cultural factors are mostly introduced in a beautiful rhetorical style, with neat counterpoint and rhythmic harmony, making every effort to render their aesthetic atmosphere.

The translation practice of the above scholars on traditional handicrafts has certain reference significance, but it is not relevant for the English translation of traditional practical handicrafts in Guangxi. Therefore, this paper takes the bilingual introduction of Guangxi Qinzhou Nixing pottery's purchase foreign website and Guangxi Guilin Museum's Guangxi Horsehair Embroidery Baby-Carrying Strap as examples, and explores the English translation of their bilingual introduction texts under the translation model of the adaptation theory.

### 3. The Adaptation Model of Translation

The choice of translation principles has been a point of debate among countless scholars, i.e., to choose different translation principles and translation strategies according to different texts and different translation purposes. However, one of the characteristics of the Adaptation Theory is that translators consciously choose translation strategies according to different translation purposes, so as to achieve the translation purpose of cross-cultural communication, which won't limit the translators to a single translation strategy, but help them to use different translation strategies consciously, so as to adopt systematic and complete translation strategies.

Adaptation Theory suggests that language users use language as a continuous process of linguistic choice, and that there are three key concepts of language choice: linguistic variability refers to "the range of possibilities within which linguistic choices can be made"; linguistic synergy refers to "the fact that all choices are not made mechanically or strictly according to formal-functional relationships, but rather on the basis of highly flexible principles and strategies"; language responsiveness refers to the property that "allows language users to make flexible adaptations from the options available to meet communicative needs". In other words, language users make conscious choices in response to different contexts when selecting and understanding language.

Any translation act has one or more specific translation purposes at different translation stages, and in the whole translation process, the choices of all stages are subordinated to their own purposes. Therefore, the translator must consciously choose the translation strategy according to the translation purpose and adapt to the specific communicative environment and the communicative object, so as to complete the translation. Song(2004) describes the process and model of adaptative translation activities as follows: first, interpreting the source language text and selecting the meaning; second, facing multiple choices of expression strategies and techniques when expressing the selected meaning in the target language; third, clarifying the translation purpose and selecting the object or dimension of responsiveness; and fourth, selecting the corresponding strategic techniques to achieve the corresponding adaptation.

In a word, translation is a process of constantly adjusting to adapt and making appropriate choices, and there is no specific translation standard or translation strategy.

### 4. English Translation of Traditional Practical Handicrafts in Guangxi

#### 4.1. Interpreting the Source Language Text

In this stage, it is interpreting the selected text. British translation theorist Newmark classified texts into three types: expressive, informative, and vocative.

In terms of the function of informative texts, the introduction of traditional practical handicrafts mainly focuses on the objective introduction of what they are and the craft of making them. When translating informative texts in English, it is generally necessary to ensure a concise and logical language style of questions, with objectivity and descriptiveness as the main expressions. In terms of the function of vocative text, the introduction of traditional handicrafts has the function of propaganda and persuasion in addition to the function of conveying information. Due to the existence of cultural and social background differences, translators should consciously conform to the conventions of the genre in the target language as far as possible in terms of expressions and formats when translating, so as to achieve the purpose of intercultural communication.

Example 1 外婆亲手缝制而成，外婆传给妈妈，妈妈又传给女儿。

Original translation: It is handed down by the grandmother to the mother and then to the daughter.

Corrected translation: It is handed down through generations.

The original translation, though complete in its literal meaning, was too complex and, in the English-speaking culture, although there is also a generational expression, there is no gender distinction, so in order to ensure that the language is concise and clear, while also conforming as much as possible to the English style of writing. The author changes It is handed down by the grandmother to the mother and then to the daughter into It is handed down through generations.

#### 4.2. Using Multiple Expression Strategies and Techniques

Adaptation theory emphasizes that translation is a kind of cross-cultural linguistic communication activity, and it is difficult for the source language and the target language to correspond completely due to the background of the time, cultural background and communication environment, etc. If the target language adapts to the reader's object and the specific communication occasion, the purpose of translation is also achieved, and such translation is acceptable.

The translation strategy of direct translation can adapt to the culture of the source language to a certain extent in order to preserve the national characteristics of the source language.

Example 2 背带

Translation: baby-carrying strap

The translation strategy of paraphrasing, one can adapt to the cultural context of the source language to understand the meaning of the source language. When faced with culturally rich words in the source language, they can be understood and accepted by the target language readers while preserving the cultural connotation of the source language.

Example 3 满月

Translation: a baby's completion of its first month of life

In Chinese culture, 满月 refers to the day when a baby reaches 30 days after birth. The text retains the cultural connotation of 满月 and expresses its actual meaning through paraphrasing.

#### 4.3. Clarifying the Purpose of Translation and the Level of Conformity

As an introduction to traditional practical handicrafts, the text contains a large number of descriptions of the methods of handcrafting techniques, which is categorized as an application-oriented text. Application-oriented text is a practical text with a focus on logical expression, which does not allow too much subjectivity and highlight more on the objective information of the text content, with the main purpose of translation being to provide information. Therefore, in the translation process, the principle of communicative translation is mainly adopted, focusing on the reaction of the target language readers, so that the target language readers can produce the same effect as the source language readers. In this way the simple and logical expressions should be consciously adapted.

Furthermore, the cultural connotation of a traditional Chinese handicraft is very rich. In the process of its English translation, cross-cultural communication is essential. Preserving the national culture and national characteristics of the source language is very important in cross-cultural communication. At this level of adaptation, the translator should also adopt the principle of semantic translation to convey the cultural connotation of Guangxi traditional handicrafts.

#### 4.4. Achieving Corresponding Adaptation

The text has different translation purposes and levels of adaptation in introducing the handcrafting techniques of Guangxi Qinzhou Nixing pottery and then the corresponding adaptation is realized according to the different translation purposes.

Example 4 压滤

Original translation: pressure filter

Corrected translation: grinding and filtering.

The original translation does not capture the appropriate level of adaptation when introducing the production process of Qinzhou Nixing pottery. In the Chinese introduction, 压滤 means to grind and filter the mixed clay through grinding balls for a long time to make the clay more delicate. However, the English translation uses "pressure filter", which emphasizes the pressing and filtering of the clay instead of grinding it, and does not express the fact that grinding the clay is time-consuming in accordance with the function of the informative text.

Example 5 陈腐

Original translation: aging

Corrected translation: aging the clay in a wet dark room

陈腐 in the Chinese text is not as simple as the original translation aging, but 陈腐 refers to placing the soil after vacuum treatment. The condition of 陈腐 is in a humid dark room. Therefore, according to the translation principle of communicative translation, the author uses the translation strategy of paraphrasing to translate 陈腐 into aging the clay in a wet dark room.

### 5. Conclusion

This article discusses the English translation of Guangxi traditional practical handicrafts (Guangxi Qinzhou Nixing pottery and Guangxi Horsehair Embroidery Baby-Carrying Strap) under the translation mode of the Adaptation Theory. No matter adopting the principle of semantic translation or communicative translation, or the translation strategy of paraphrasing or direct translation, the translator should on the first place clarify the main translation purpose on the basis of accurate understanding of the original text, so as to adapt to the context that conveys its cultural connotation and skills. After that the translators should consciously choose different translation strategies or translation principles according to different levels of adaptation. Besides the translators should consider the quality of English translation of international and local traditional handicrafts while trying to resolve the difficulties of understanding cultural differences when making foreign translations, so as to achieve the purpose of foreign publicity and enable people in the world to understand Guangxi from the perspective of traditional handicrafts.

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