

## The Role of Diasporic Translators in Translating Chinese Culture

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**Abstract:** With the development of cultural globalization, Chinese culture’s “going out” has emerged as an inevitable historical development, which is also a necessity for Chinese and Chinese culture to have confidence in standing among all nations. As a special group of translators, diasporic translators play a crucial role in the translation of Chinese culture. Therefore, the key problem to be solved in this study is how to dynamically construct the identity of discrete translators, and on this basis, clarify the translation strategies they adopt in cultural translation.

### 1. Introduction

In present days, cultural globalization has gradually formed under the further development of the multi-polar world and economic globalization. And as we all know that Chinese culture is always closely linked with world culture, no matter at ancient times or present. Learning and exchanging with other cultures all over the world, China is able to strength its cultural power. Promoting Chinese culture’s “going out” is an important part of advancing cultural soft power and cultural development and prosperity of China. It is also the only way to participate in the global cultural industry to increase the share of the international cultural market. Translation seems to be a simple task. Actually, it’s elaborate, translation has direct function on bearing the implication of other cultures and the increasing influence of Chinese culture. Therefore, good translation has effectively promoted the sound development of Chinese culture both in China and abroad. And as an important intermediary of two different languages, translation is indispensable in the process of Chinese culture’s “going out”. So it is imperative to explore proper translation strategies to make these gorgeous Chinese cultures going out greatly.

### 2. The Necessity of Chinese Culture’s “Going out” Translation Strategies

While being influenced by the cultural globalization, our country is gradually aware of the significance and value of the cultural construction in China. And in the context of cultural globalization, China must implement the “cultural self-confidence” proposed by Comrade Xi Jinping, and seize the opportunity of cultural development to spread the national culture to all countries in the world, making Chinese culture the most attractive in world culture. There is no doubt that the contribution of translation to it can’t be ignored. In other words, translation is an indispensable activation factor in the development of Chinese culture so as to Chinese culture’s “going out”. So translation strategies are necessary for Chinese culture going out.

However, due to different lifestyles and cultural differences, if the translator does not explain the culture included in original, it is difficult for foreign readers to understand; if a large number of deletions and word replacements are used to help readers understand, the work will lose its original charm. And even misunderstandings by readers can play a role in cultural communication. For example, Mo Yan can become the first Chinese writer to win the Nobel Prize for literature. In addition to his own literary achievements, the contribution of Ge Haowen's translation merits is also

beyond doubt. Professor Ge Haowen followed the original intention of the author as well as the original in terms of expression and cultural understanding. Therefore, translating meanings and guaranteeing the quality of translation, translators try to preserve the Chinese cultural elements in the original works and give them annotations to help and encourage foreign readers to understand Chinese culture, so as to achieve cultural transformation in translation.

At present, the researches for this topic are not comprehensive enough. They may just focus on one or two aspects like problems, challenges, cultures, translation strategies and so on. However, this thesis will make more comprehensive study on translation strategies of Chinese culture “going out” from the problems or challenges, translation strategies and the aspect of cultural self-confidence to deepen the realization of Chinese culture’s “going out” and its translation strategies.

### **3. Translation Strategies & the Role of Diasporic Translators in Translating Chinese Culture**

After translation studies shifted from linguistics to culture, the focus of researchers was no longer a simple conversion between the two languages, but the communication between different cultures hidden behind the text. Translation is the carrier between two different cultures. The quality of the translation directly relates to the quality of the Chinese culture that goes out and directly affects whether the road of Chinese culture “going out” can be flourish. Therefore, what kind of translation manners used to promote the Chinese culture “going out” are of utmost importance. Now, the following will be from a more comprehensive perspective to analyse this issue from the translators, translation content, and translation angles and methods.

#### **3.1 On Translators.**

Language is an integral part and a carrier of culture. To a certain extent, there is no culture without language. And many people agree with this definition that translation is a cross-language, cross-cultural communication activity. And then we all know that translation is an activity that includes original texts, translators, and target texts. Translator plays a very important role in the conversion of the original to the target language. And they not only deal with the language problems in translation, but also the cultural issues. In order to promote the outward development of Chinese culture, translators should have a sense of localization, strengthen cultural awareness and cultural self-confidence, and maintain the national character in translation. Some translators have a serious lack of recognition of traditional culture and their content of advanced culture are always in developed countries like Europe and North America, Japan and South Korea; some translators lack the knowledge of the classics of national culture; even some lack confidence in the future of the country. All these behaviors are not advisable for Chinese culture development to the world. Only the translators have strong knowledge of Chinese culture and cultural consciousness will they have confidence and ability to maintain Chinese cultural character and carry forward our culture to the world.

Except sense of localization, translators should also pay attention to the culture of the target language. However, many translators support that they should in a “Invisibility” state. “Invisibility”, explained by Norman Shapiro “I see translation as the attempt to produce a text so transparent that it does not seem to be translated. A good translation is like a pane of glass. You only notice that it’s when there are little imperfections---scratches, bubble, Ideally, there shouldn’t be any. It should never call attention to itself” (The Translators’ Invisibility, 2004:1). The “transparent” is the translators’ invisibility which means the translation is totally same as the original and does not have any breath of the translators. Actually, this view does not totally apply to culture communication especially the sustainable development of culture. Audience awareness is essential in cultural communication. Translators must know that who are the readers and what they need and how to meet their needs. And there is a huge difference between foreign audiences and domestic audiences in languages, customs, lifestyles, values, political systems and so on. For example, David’s *The Story Of the Stone* and *A Dream of Red Mansion* of Yang Xianyi both are translations of the same Chinese novel, however, they used different name due to the different culture ideals. So translators should have an open and inclusive mind as well as an international perspective and strengthen their

reasonable understanding of foreign advanced cultural values, which will make the translations attract more foreign audiences without losing Chinese culture's features to further Chinese culture towards the world.

### 3.2 On Content.

Chinese culture is very profound and rich, and there are so many things that can go out. Therefore, the choice of translation content also should be timely and adaptable to local conditions. And in translation content, it should reflect the relationship between ancient and modern, elegant and popular, and literary and non-literary, reflecting Chinese characteristics, Chinese habits, and Chinese styles. There are mainly divided into the following three categories:

Firstly, ancient and modern outstanding culture. Such as Chinese languages and writings, traditional arts, classics, traditional Chinese medicine, martial arts and so on. For example, the Four Books, Five Classics, and Six Arts (Four Books: The Great learning 《大学》 The doctrine of the Mean 《中庸》 The Analects of Confucius 《论语》 论语 Mencius 《孟子》; The Five Classics: The Book of Songs 《诗经》 The Book of History 《书经》 The Book of Changes 《易经》 The Book of Rites 《礼经》 The Spring and Autumn Annals 《春秋》 编年史; Six Arts: Etiquette 礼 Music 乐 Archery 射 Equestrianism 术 Calligraphy 书 Arithmetic 数) which could be regarded as the marrow of Chinese ancient culture. People could combine modern culture and foreign culture more acceptable to translate these outstanding culture.

Secondly, humanistic care and common values. In other words, emotions. Such as the long for true love and freedom; the attention to environment and others who are suffering. Translators can choose some Chinese stories and Chinese views to translate. For example, Legend of the White Snake, The Butterfly Lovers and so on. And we all know that such cultures can catch many foreigners' eyes, like many foreigners regards the seventh of July as Chinese Valentine's Day because the story of The cowherd and weaving girl which tells a couple who was separated due to identity differences and can only meet each at on the seventh of July of each year. Besides, many Chinese political attitudes can be also a good content; such as the "Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence" which reveals Chinese kindly and friendly attitudes to other countries and nations.

Thirdly, culture about tourism, education, film and television, social life. These are what foreigners wants to know. This content is useful to expand the foundation of Chinese culture. For example, the translation and popularity of A Bite of China, a Chinese food documentary which makes many citizens of other countries know more about Chinese food and begin to desire for Chinese food. So these are all good materials for translators to pay more attention to.

### 3.3 On Angles and Methods.

On transmission means. First, to make full use of the mass media. In order to effectively improve the influence of Chinese culture, there is no doubt that People should first pay attention to the quality of translated works, and then increase the publicity of translated works. And for example, for western audiences, it requires people to strengthen their analysis of western cultural markets, understand the needs of western readers, effectively reduce cultural differences, and fully utilize foreign readers for translation and promotion, in order to better enable readers to recognize translated works, foreign readers can better understand Chinese culture. Good translation plus good publicity can promote culture's "going out" better. For example, the domestic sales of EVENING TALK AROUND THE FIRE STOVE are even lower than Bulgaria after translation because of proper overseas publicity. So it is necessary to use mass media to spread nice translations for more people.

On translation methods. There are many translation methods such as literal translation, free translation, transliteration, foreignization and domestication and so on. Translators should, based on the actual situation, make their own choices, select the most suitable translation methods for different contents, and translate the translated version that is acceptable to the target language audience without compromising Chinese cultural characteristics. There are some examples:

First, literal translation. "谋事在人, 成事在天" (Romantic of Three Kingdoms) to "Man purpose, Heaven disposes". Actually, there are also many people translated "天" as "God" and each has it's

own benefits. But “Heaven” possess more Chinese features than “God” which more feels like foreign religious Christianity. And what it to say is that, in the process of translation, it is very important pay attention to how to maintain Chinese culture.

Then, free translation. “亡羊补牢” to “Don’t lock the stable door after the horse has been stolen”. According to the understanding of the idiom, translators make their translations. And we know that China has many similar words and allusions, which demands translators to comprehend them first. But how to make these translations maintain Chinese culture characters? First, attached relevant stories or allusions after the translations. Then, the transliteration. According to the Chinese pronunciation to translate relevant originals. Like “jiaozi”, “Kung fu”, “Chipao” and so on.

And the foreignization, it was proposed by Lawrence Venuti in his *The Translators’ Invisibility*; and in history it could be regarded as extension of the concept of free translation but not equivalent to free translation. Then take Chinese ancient poetry for example, “芙蓉帐暖度春宵” (THE EVERLASTING REGRET 《长恨歌》) to “How warm in her pure(lotus-flower) curtains to pass a night of spring”. First, “芙蓉帐”. “芙蓉” means “elegant, rich” in China, however, there is no such meaning in other countries. The translation “pure(lotus-flower) curtains” which allows readers to understand the features of “芙蓉” as well as the tenderness of emperor, the foreignization strategy here effectively conveys Chinese culture. There are also many other translation methods; I’m not describe by examples one by one here.

All in all, for Chinese culture’s well “going out”, in the process of translation, translators should both maintain national characteristics and fuse target languages habits.

#### **4. Maintaining Cultural Self-Confidence in the Process of “Going out”**

##### **4.1 Definition and Significant of Cultural Self-confidence.**

First of all, cultural self-confidence is full affirmation of a nation or country’s cultural values through active practices. It’s also a firm belief in the vitality of the nation’s culture.

In addition, history and reality show that the awakening of a nation should first be a cultural awakening. A high degree of cultural awareness not only relates to the prosperity of culture itself, but also determines the future and destiny of a nation and country. Reliance on cultural self-confidence is a concentrated expression of a country’s overall development and national self-confidence, and it is also an inevitable choice for realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. For example, in ancient times, Qin(Qin Dynasty221-206BC) burned the books and buried the scholars alive to cut down other countries culture support, which is a movement to unify ideas essentially, and Qin united six countries at last. Give another example, the former superpower Soviet Union disintegrated in 1991 one of the most important reason is that the public was bewildered by the advocacy of Western public opinion and peaceful evolution. It negates the country’s history, the great man, and even doubts its own course of choice, which has led to the crisis and civil unrest being exploited by hostile forces. All these show the importance of the cultural self-confidence, and China should have firm belief in its history and culture.

##### **4.2 Ways to Keep Cultural Self-confidence.**

First, the leader should stress the importance of the cultural self-confidence to people and setting themselves up as the example. The people are the foundation of the country. Only by letting the Chinese people understand the charm and power of Chinese culture can make cultural self-confidence meaningful and make the country more united and stronger. Although President Xi has emphasized cultural self-confidences in many speeches, not enough yet. Not only president but also other leaders and influential person could talk with people that the Chinese culture and self-confidence. And leaders should set an example, believing in Chinese culture, and promoting Chinese culture, always taking culture self-confidence on an important position.

Then, on the perspective of Chinese people. On the one hand, Chinese should have a good command of their own culture and understand the pride of Chinese culture, which makes strong

beliefs form an indelible cultural confidence. In addition, people must not blindly follow the Chinese culture as a whole, but abandon the corrupt culture, treat China's culture with a critical attitude. To exert the power of unity for Chinese culture going out, people pass on the excellent Chinese culture and share it with nations over the world. And on the other hand, as we all know that other countries' cultures also have a great influence on Chinese, which needs people pay more attention to it to avoid excessive worship of foreign cultures.

## 5. Conclusion

This paper strives to make an elaboration on the strategies of Chinese culture "going out", from translation perspectives and other angles, in order to promote some supports for Chinese culture going out. Actually, there are many studies on culture or cultural translation. But for the Chinese culture's "going out", there are more Chinese scholars.

For Chinese culture "going out", it is a huge system, people should consider relevant problems from both macro aspect and micro aspect, analysis the big background and small environment, understand the problems and difficult at present or in the future which can make people put forward better translation strategies.

And for Chinese culture's "going out", good translation strategies, the key point of this paper, are necessary. And for strategies, this article stresses the importance of excellent translators first. It is essential to train excellent translators who should have correct translation attitudes and strong translation capacity which includes knowledge of all aspects. Then, except translators, it is very important to choose proper contents that possess Chinese characters as well as attractive for foreign friends. The content could be literature, folk customs myths or legends, even special lifestyles and so on, but the point is that the selected culture should be superior than those unselected content. In addition, the proper translation methods are also very important. Actually, for different contents and different purposes, translators should choose proper methods to express original cultural features, which is also an important skills that translators should be equipped with. The relative description of translators, contents and methods for the translation strategies of Chinese culture "going out" are in the fifth chapter of this paper.

At last, faith is very important for a nations cultural power to be stronger and stronger. All of those translation strategies should be established on culture consciousness and cultural self-confidence, any other thing cannot achieve without them.

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