

Original Paper

A Study on Cultural Default and Compensation in C-E Translation of Soft News from the Perspective of Relevance Theory: A Case Study of *China Daily* in 2022

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Abstract

Cultural default and compensation play an important role not only in literary translation, but also in many non-literary translation fields, including news translation. Under the guidance of relevance theory, this paper takes the bilingual soft news of China Daily as the materials adopts the literature method and case analysis method to examine the cultural defaults in the translation process of soft news, and finds out the appropriate compensation strategies. Through research, it is found that the most common cultural defaults in soft news are linguistic cultural defaults, followed by social cultural defaults, material cultural defaults, ecological cultural defaults and religious cultural defaults. In addition, reconstruction, transliteration and transplantation are common compensation strategies in translation, which need to be adjusted flexibly according to translation requirements. This study is expected to provide some reference for the translation of soft news and attract more scholars' attention to cultural default and compensation in soft news translation, so as to improve the translation quality of soft news.

Keywords

Soft news, Culture default and compensation, Relevance theory, English translation study, China Daily

1. Introduction

An exponential increase in information and technological exchange between China and other countries is leading to closer connections. And Soft news plays an important role in foreign exchanges. What's more, *China Daily*, the earliest national English website in China has become a national comprehensive media website. Soft news on the website of *China Daily*, which covers many aspects of life, is widely

followed by readers. However, searching results found that there are only few researches on soft news, which are mostly conducted from the perspectives of communicative translation theory, functional translation theory and Skopos theory. Moreover, the use of relevance theory to study cultural default and compensation also focuses on the translation of literary works. Therefore, this paper will study the cultural default and compensation in soft news of *China Daily* 2022 under the guidance of relevance theory.

The research aims to discover the cultural defaults and appropriate strategies of translation compensation and improve translation quality to some extent. The use of Relevance Theory provides a theoretical foundation for the research of cultural default and compensation in soft news. This study can increase the research achievements of Relevance Theory in the field of cultural default and compensation in the translating soft news and give full play to the cultural transmission power of soft news. The paper hopes to find out what cultural defaults exist in soft news of *China Daily* in 2022, and what cultural compensation strategies can be adopted to achieve the best relevance.

This paper mainly adopts the literature and case analysis method. Literature analysis refers to the method of collecting, identifying and sorting out literature, and forming scientific understanding of facts through literature research. The definition of case analysis is a scientific analysis method. To sum up, these methods are not isolated, but combined to help the author acquire relevant theoretical knowledge and guide the research.

2. Cultural Default and Compensation in Soft News

2.1 Introduction to Cultural Default and Compensation

“The cultural default is the absence of relevant cultural background knowledge shared by the writer and his intended readers in their communication” (Wang, 1997). “In terms of the number of Grice’s co-operative principles, the speaker or writer does not say or write something unnecessary, but simply transmits all the information necessary to disseminate the whole message and meaning” (Kramsch, 2000). In short, cultural default means that people from the same country or society will have the same cultural knowledge background, so in the process of communication, in order to improve the efficiency of communication, they will omit their common cultural background knowledge. Although cultural default exists naturally in the process of cultural transmission and is the result of cultural development, readers without the same knowledge background have difficulties in connecting the information in the text with the knowledge and experience outside the text, thus causing difficulties in understanding. In this case, it is necessary to take measures to help them understand the real intention of the message sender.

Cultural compensation means that in the process of translation, the translator uses one or more translation strategies to complete the cultural background information omitted by the message sender, so as to help the receiver understand the purpose of the message sender.

2.2 Introduction to Soft News

Soft news is an indispensable part of People's Daily life. Therefore, this section will study soft news by introducing its definition and language features. Soft news refers to that news with human interest, strong knowledge and interest and easy and lively language, is easy to stimulate readers' interest in reading. Secondly, it has no immediate interest relationship with people and its timeliness is weak. Such as social news, entertainment news, sports news and so on.

The expression of words in network soft news is strong, which can improve readers' cultural literacy, broaden their horizons, and enhance their understanding of other countries' cultures. In addition, proper nouns, hot words, compound words and abbreviations are often used in the writing of soft news. To some extent, these words make the content of soft news richer, more interesting and more readable.

Soft news is different from other news. Firstly, because it pays more attention to the expression effect and readers' feelings, rhetoric devices are widely used in soft news, such as pun, metaphor, personification, etc., among which pun rhetoric devices can not only convey the intended meaning of news but also enrich the expression effect, so journalists often use pun to write news. Not only can arouse readers' interest in reading, but also can convey the content of the news. Secondly, in order to accurately and vividly explain the facts that have happened, soft news has flexible sentence patterns, such as inverted sentence, elliptical sentence, imperative sentence and exclamatory sentence. Thirdly, it is easy for readers to find that the present and future tenses are used more in soft news, while the past, present continuous and present perfect tenses are rarely used in soft news. Finally, cultural elements are abundant in soft news, because soft news has various types, such as news sketches, critical news, exclusive interviews and so on. In addition, soft news topics are diverse and involve many aspects, such as history and culture, religious belief, social life, etc. Language is the carrier of culture and cannot exist independently from culture.

2.3 Previous Study at Home and Abroad

Cultural default refers to the background knowledge that is defaulted and automatically omitted by both parties in the communication. Compensation refers to taking different translation strategies to compensate for omitted information. Cultural default and compensation have a long history of development. In recent years, scholars at home and abroad have carried out in-depth research on cultural default. Through literature search, the main viewpoints are as follows.

In foreign countries, Brown and Yule put forward "the concept of cultural default in their work". "Compensating strategy is a means of equivalency with the source text during the translation process" (Hatim & Mason, 1997). "If there is a metaphor or omission in the original text, translators should compensate these omissions during their translation" and also suggested that "translators choose different translation methods according to different defaults" (Newmark, 2001).

In China, "one of the principles of compensation for cultural default in translation is to make the target reader acquires aesthetic pleasure of the original text so the translator should compensate for the cultural default while keeping the aesthetic value of the source text" (Wang, 2004). Based on the

communicative translation theory, the phenomenon of cultural defaults in English financial news and the translation compensation strategies adopted in the processing of cultural information, and proposed specific compensation strategies such as contextual amplification, paraphrase, adaptation and perspective of shift (Bai, 2021).

In short, previous scholars mostly studied the classification and compensation strategies of cultural default based on literary works under relevance theory or from other theories to study the cultural default and compensation in news.

3. Introduction to Relevance Theory

3.1 Main Concepts of Relevance Theory

Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson proposed Relevance Theory in their book *Relevance: Communication and Cognition*. They defined relevance as, “the connection between an assumption and a set of contextual assumption”, Their student Gut, based on their translation research on relevance Theory, “proposed relevance translation theory in *Translation and Relevance: Cognition and Context*, and applied relevance theory to translation activities” (Wang, 2018). This part mainly introduces some basic concepts of relevance theory, its interpretation of cultural defaults and its application in translation.

Ostensive-inferential is two parts of the communication process. Sperber and Wilson argued that although a particular communication process involves the use of code, this does not mean that the entire process must be interpreted in terms of a code model. They also realize that communication is not a single process, and a single communication model cannot properly explain communication. “Ostensive-inferential communication means that the communicator generates a stimulus so that both the communicator and the audience can understand that the communicator intends to show or more obviously indicate a set of hypotheses to the audience through such stimulus” (Wang, 2018).

Ostensive-inferential processes include two aspects: explicit communication and inferential communication, which are carried out by the sender and the receiver respectively. In short, the sender of information always provides the most relevant information, which is the express link in the process of express-reasoning. Then the receiver makes inferences according to the relevant context in his cognitive environment. The information obtained by the receiver includes the utterance information and the sender’s intention. If the information receiver’s inference is the same as the intention of the information sender, that is, the information sender accurately expresses his intention with the help of words, and the information receiver obtains the information and then understands the purpose of the information sender, this is mutual manifestation. When the message sender achieves the communicative intention through the express message, the communicative activity can proceed smoothly, which is called effective communication.

The concept of optimal relevance comes from relevance theory. “The listener’s ability to obtain sufficient contextual effects after minimal processing efforts in understanding discourse” (Zhao, 1999). According to relevance theory, in the process of communication, both parties always pursue the optimal

relevance. Generally speaking, in communication, the sender of information hopes that the receiver can understand the received information. The receiver wants to make less effort and get better contextual effects. Therefore, in the process of communication, the purpose of the information sender and the information receiver is the same, that is, to obtain the best communication effect. In order to achieve this, the message sender needs to provide the hypothesis that can produce the best contextual effect, which is most relevant to the cognitive context of the audience. The reasoning process of the information receiver is a process of searching for relevance to achieve the best contextual effect. That is, the more relevant the message is to the listener, the less effort the listener makes to infer from the utterance. Whether the communication is successful or not, the communication parties find the optimal correlation marks the success of communication.

According to relevance theory, cognitive context is a set and the premise of discourse interpretation. In other words, the cognitive context includes not only the physical environment information, but also a series of assumptions about the world in the human mind, such as future expectations, past memories, religious beliefs and cultural knowledge. Therefore, all the information in the mind is important for discourse interpretation. "Cognitive context is the systematization of assumptions through which utterances can be explained" (Sperber & Wilson, 2001). According to relevance theory, verbal communication can be regarded as a kind of express-inferential communication, in which context is very important. In this process, the express information is incomplete, so it is necessary to supplement the express information in order to draw a valid conclusion. Moreover, since communicative intention is latent, context may be extended by communicators. However, not all factors in the cognitive environment can be used to explain language in communication. The parts used to interpret language are called contexts.

3.2 Principles of Relevance

The cognitive principle is the first principle of relevance, which mainly solves cognitive problems; The communicative principle is the second principle of relevance theory, which mainly deals with communicative problems. The cognitive principles provide background information for the express-inferential communication model. There is a lot of information in the human brain, but not all of it is valid for a given communication. In fact, only information relevant to the speaker matters. According to cognitive characteristics, human beings can choose the most relevant information for processing, so as to obtain positive cognitive effects. The communicative principle is based on the cognitive principle. In communication, communicators tend to produce an ostensive stimulus to stimulate the cognitive environment of the recipient. The actual stimulus indicates the communicator's intention to achieve optimal relevance. "If the ostensive stimulus is related to the audience's cognition, the context effect will be larger and the correlation will be correspondingly larger" (Sperber & Wilson, 2001).

3.3 The Relationship Between Cultural Default and Compensation and Relevance Theory

Relevance theory holds that any express-inferential communication process is considered to have the

optimal relevance. In communicative activities, people usually expect to pay the minimum cognitive effort to obtain the maximum contextual effect, so as to achieve the optimal relevance. Context is called context hypothesis in relevance theory. The common cognitive environment possessed by both sides of communication is mutual cognitive environment. Relevance theory emphasizes the role of cognitive context in communication, and cognitive context includes economic principles in language communication. In other words, if both parties have as much of the same cognitive background as possible, the efficiency of communication can be greatly improved. In the process of ostensive-inferential communication, the sender of information will predict the receiver's knowledge background and cognitive context, and omit the common knowledge content and pattern as known information. When inferring, the information receiver combines its own original cognitive context, activates the existing memory mode, and actively fills the vacancy in the original language, trying to find the optimal relevance between discourse and context, so as to achieve the best contextual effect. The key to understanding the meaning of a text lies in the relevance principle and the cognitive environment shared by both sides of the communication. Due to the common cognitive context, cultural default does not affect the communication between the source language author and the source language reader. However, for the target language readers, the lack of culture causes obstacles to the understanding of the semantics. Therefore, the existence of cultural defaults can complicate translation and pose a challenge to translators.

According to the above analysis, cultural default occurs in most cases in communication, which is also the case in soft news translation. In order to improve communication efficiency, the original author of a news will unconsciously omit the cultural background information shared by both parties, but the unconscious omission by the original author will increase the difficulty of understanding for foreign readers without the same background. Therefore, based on relevance theory, translators need to choose appropriate compensation strategies according to the express information of the original author and the cognitive context of foreign readers in the process of translation, so as to reduce the reasoning difficulty of foreign readers, obtain the best contextual effect and achieve the optimal relevance.

4. Analysis of Cultural Default and Compensation in Soft News Translation Under Relevance Theory

4.1 Cultural Default in Soft News Translation

Different countries or regions have unique cultures, and cultural default in communication causes difficulties in understanding information sender and receiver from different cognitive environments. "Culture is divided into five categories: social culture, ecological culture, material culture, religious culture and linguistic culture" (Nida, 1964). In the following paragraphs, according to Nida's classification, the author classifies cultural default into five categories in soft news including social cultural default, ecological cultural default, material cultural default, religious cultural default and linguistic cultural default in soft news translation.

Social culture refers to various cultural phenomena and activities, including customs, values, and kinship terms that are closely connected with the production and living conditions of the masses at the grassroots level. They are created by the masses at the grassroots level, have regional, national or group characteristics, and exert extensive influence on social groups. Therefore, in translation process, the original author will omit the social cultural background which is social culture default.

Example 1:

SL: 人们采用泡、煮等方式，在家庭、工作场所、茶馆、餐厅和寺院等场所饮用茶。茶是社交领域以及婚礼、拜师、祭祀等仪式的重要组成部分。

TL: Steeped or boiled tea is served in homes, workplaces, tea houses, restaurants, temples and used as an important medium for communication in socializing and ceremonies such as weddings, apprentice-taking and sacrifices.

“拜师” is a professional custom in various industries such as handicraft industry, service industry and entertainment industry. New practitioners or learners form mentoring relationships with those who teach skills through rituals. The formation of the custom of “拜师” in China is influenced by Confucianism, which can be traced back to Confucius receiving apprentices. This custom is a unique cultural phenomenon in China, and it is a social cultural default for Western readers. In the process of translation, it is difficult for the target language readers to understand the real intention of the message sender, because of the existence of social cultural default. Therefore, the communicative effect can be reduced.

Ecological culture is composed of the unique environment and geographical features of a country or region. Because the geographical environment of each country is different, there will be cognitive differences between different countries, which is the ecological cultural default. “The default of ecological culture will reflect the diversity and uniqueness of regional culture” (Jiao, 2013). Local plant and animal names fall into this category, leading to cultural default and creating translation barriers.

Example 2:

SL: “金鸡独立”可测试你的寿命

TL: Wobbly on one leg? Ability to balance is linked to a longer life

“金鸡” refers to a mythical chicken that comes from Chinese mythology and is also referred to as the sun. If they know little knowledge about traditional Chinese culture, “金鸡” will be a strange concept for foreign readers. For foreign readers, it is ecological cultural defaults. In translation, due to the lack of knowledge of the ecological cultural default of the target language readers, it will increase the difficulty of their understanding of the original information, and they cannot make the minimum inferential effort to achieve the best communication.

Religious culture embodies the spread and inheritance of human culture. Different countries or regions are influenced differently by different religions, so they have unique religious cultures. For example, Buddhism was introduced earlier than Christianity and Islam in China, so its influence on China is greater than that of the other two religions. Due to the spread of Buddhism in China, it has influenced

every aspect of Chinese people's life. For example, it has become the object of belief of many Chinese people, and there are more and more expressions related to Buddhism in Chinese. On the contrary, most western countries are influenced by Christianity and believe in God. Because of these differences, translators need to fully consider various influencing factors and make proper choices in the process of translation in order to achieve the best communicative effect.

Example 3 :

SL: 玄奘寺还供奉了几块日本战犯的佛教牌位.

TL: Several Buddhist memorial tablets of Japanese war criminals had been commemorated at the Xuanzang Temple.

“玄奘” is a prominent monk in Tang Dynasty. He is one of the four major translators of Chinese Buddhist classics, and the founder of one school of Chinese Buddhism. Although there is no such person as Xuanzang in foreign history and culture, with the in-depth development of international exchanges, many foreign readers have a certain understanding of him. In short, “玄奘” is a religious cultural default. To some extent, the lack of religious culture increases the difficulty of the target language readers' understanding. However, due to the great influence of religion, sometimes religious culture has little influence on the target language readers' understanding of the intention of the message sender by cultural default.

Material culture refers to what is created by people in a particular language society. “These terms cover a wide range of fields, including means of production, means of transportation, daily necessities, food, medicine, clothing, units of measurement and units of weight, etc.” (Hu and Du, 1999). Each country has its own unique expression of these material cultures. Therefore, cultural default phenomenon will occur in translation, making it difficult for translators to find equivalent expression methods.

Example 4:

SL: 螺蛳粉月饼馅料是这些当地食材, 为人们提供了独特的节日体验.

TL: Luosifen mooncakes are filled with these local ingredients offering crowds a unique festival experience.

Example 5:

SL: 多方发声稳定房地产业 有力推进“保交楼”

TL: Report: Stable housing in need of more efforts

“螺蛳粉” is a staple food made with Luositang, rice noodles and specific ingredients. In 2008, Liuzhou River noodle handmade technology was selected into the Intangible Cultural Heritage List of Guangxi Province. “螺蛳粉” is a strange food for foreigners so they don't know what it is by reading it literally. “交楼”, a Chinese policy refers to ensure that real estate developers in accordance with the contract, according to the quality of the property delivery to buyers, to avoid problems such as half-built buildings. This is one of the important foundations for the healthy development of the real estate industry and an important measure to protect the rights and interests of consumers. Therefore, in translation process, “螺蛳粉” and “保交楼” are material cultural default for people who come from

other countries with different cultural background. From the perspective of translation, target language readers who lack the same cultural background including food, clothing, house etc. as the message sender will encounter material culture default, which prevents them from understanding the original text.

Linguistic culture default refers to the fact that some linguistic expressions in one culture do not exist in another culture, and there are no corresponding and similar expressions. Language and culture are closely connected. The unique language expression habits of different countries hide the unique culture of this country. Cultural default is very common in language expression, because it is the common cultural background of people in the same country and region in communication. This kind of cultural default should be taken seriously in the English translation of soft news.

Example 6:

SL: 在今年十一国庆假期,“黄山旅游者每 10 分钟移动 1 米”成为社交媒体上的热门话题,而在这段时间,黄山等知名旅游景点通常都是人满为患。

TL: “Man moves 1 meter every 10 minutes on Huangshan Mountain” became a trending topic on social media during this year’s National Day holiday in October, a time when well-known tourist attractions such as Huangshan generally operate at full capacity.

“人满为患” means to cause problems or trouble because of the number of people. It is a four-character idiom in Chinese, which is a kind of linguistic cultural default for foreign readers who have little knowledge of Chinese culture. It is a strange concept and a linguistic cultural default for foreign people. Linguistic cultural default is common in translation. Translators need to take appropriate compensation strategies to help target readers understand it. Otherwise, linguistic cultural default will confuse the target readers.

In summary, since readers of soft news come from different countries and have different cultural backgrounds, there is a common phenomenon of cultural default in soft news translation. These cultural defaults increase the difficulty of understanding the target language readers. Therefore, translators need to choose appropriate translation compensation strategies according to the ostensive information of the original author and the cultural background of the target language readers.

4.2 Compensation in Soft News Translation

Compensation refers to the reconstruction of cultural default information, which is crucial to the effective transmission of soft news. In the process of translation, commonly used compensation strategies for different cultural defaults in soft news include annotation, reconstruction, cultural adaption, transliteration and transplantation. The author will analyze the cultural defaults and compensation strategies in soft news of *China Daily* in 2022 from the perspective of the relevance theory.

4.2.1 Annotation

The definition of annotation is a note by way of explanation or comment added to a text or diagram. In other words, annotation refers to the addition of footnotes or endnotes in addition to the text, which can

provide some additional explanations for specific expressions in the translated text. By reading footnotes or endnotes, the target audience can better understand the deeper meaning or background of the text. And news is famous for its conciseness, which aims to attract readers' reading interest with concise language. Therefore, short notes in the text are more common.

Example 7:

SL: 哔哩哔哩与中华书局联合发布 2022 年度弹幕：“优雅”。

TL: Bilibili, a leading video platform popular among China's younger generation, announced on Thursday the phrase of the year on its site to be “You Ya”, or “elegant/elegance” when translated literally.

When translating “优雅”, the translator adopts the method of annotation. The word “优雅” in the mind of the Chinese people is dignified and generous. However, there are no any concept about “优雅” in target language readers. It is a linguistic cultural default for them. According to the cognitive context in relevance theory, the translator takes into account the understanding ability of the target language readers and then has added “elegant/elegance” so that the target readers get the same contextual effect as the source reader with the least effort. The compensation strategy helps the target readers understand the source author's purpose and finally achieve the optimal relevance.

Example 8:

SL: 中国运用杀青、闷黄、渥堆、萎凋、做青、发酵、窈制等核心技艺，发展出绿茶、黑茶、黄茶、乌龙茶、白茶、红茶六大茶类，2000 多种茶品。

TL: Over 2,000 tea varieties, mainly in six categories -- green, black, yellow, oolong, white and dark -- are grown in China. Core skills include shaqing (enzyme inactivation), menhuang (yellowing), wodui (piling), weidiao (withering), zuoqing (leaves shaking and cooling), fajiao (oxidation or fermentation) and yinzhi (scenting).

In translation process, “杀青、闷黄、渥堆、萎凋、做青、发酵、窈制” are social cultural default. Based the ostensive-inferential communication in relevance theory, when translating this news, the translator should first fully understand the “杀青、闷黄、渥堆、萎凋、做青、发酵、窈制” in the original text. After transliteration, the names of various techniques are transliterated to preserve the cultural characteristics of the original text. However, if only transliteration is used, it will cause difficulties for the readers who lack the background knowledge of tea making techniques. Therefore, the translators also use the translation method of annotation to help the readers of the target language understand. Then the target language readers can not only feel the characteristic culture of Chinese tea making skills, but also easily understand the content of tea making skills. The application of this translation compensation strategy can help the target language readers who lack tea culture background to understand the expression content of the original text, reduce the obstacles of cultural transmission, and achieve the optimal relevance.

Example 9:

SL: 天津市民李女士为女儿准备了一个“红包”。在中国春节，长辈给晚辈发红包是节日传统。

TL: Li, a citizen of North China's Tianjin, prepared for her daughter what in China is called a "red packet", a monetary gift traditionally given by the elderly to the younger generation during Spring Festival or the start of the Chinese New Year.

“红包”, also known as New Year's money, is money wrapped in red paper that elders give to children during the Lunar New Year. It is a Chinese traditional custom. Therefore, “红包” is a social cultural default when translating. The author according to the ostensive information translates “红包” into “red packet” and annotates “a monetary gift” to clarify the meaning of “red packet”. The compensation strategy can help target readers understand the purpose of original information sender to realize the optimal relevance.

4.2.2 Reconstruction

Reconstruction means that the translator adjusts the structure and content of the original text by means of addition, omission and recombination in the process of translation. The translator needs to grasp the gist of the original text so that the target language readers can easily accept and understand the translation. In other words, reconstruction is a change. The translator changes the original text to some extent for the target audience and translation purpose. The reconstruction method mainly aims to make the target text more in line with the idiom and expression of the target language, so the translator cannot copy the structure and content of the original text in the translation process. According to the ostensive information of the original text, the translator should reasonably infer the intention of the sender of the information, on the basis of fully understanding the information, distinguish the primary and secondary, break the framework of the original text, and finally express the content of the original text in accordance with the expression of the target language.

Example 10:

SL: 世界杯小白补课帖：越位、点球决胜、帽子戏法...知识点满满

TL: Football Words and Phrases in English

Language is the carrier of culture, and the unique language expression of a country is also the embodiment of its unique culture. Linguistic cultural default occurs when translating the sentence. Chinese people likes to use descriptive words for rendering and provide more details of something, such as “知识点满满”、“越位”、“点球决胜” in the original text, but English pays attention to the expression of content and only needs to convey the content accurately. Under the guidance of relevance theory, firstly the author obtains the information and secondly, takes the cognitive context of target readers into consideration. Therefore, the translator summarized the details in the translation. Then the descriptive words were omitted, and the translator uses general words to convey the original message. Finally, the ostensive information of the original text was conveyed without causing difficulties for the readers to understand. In a word, the reconstruction translation method can make the translation more in line with the expression habits of English, and the target readers can grasp and understand the key content quickly, so as to realize the optimal relevance.

Example 11:

SL: 2024 年巴黎奥运公布吉祥物“弗里热”，灵感来自一顶“小红帽”

TL: Phrygian caps to be the Paris 2024 Games mascots

“小红帽” refers to a character in Little Red Riding Hood, a fairy tale by German writer Grimm, and also refers to a red hat. Due to the differences in expression habits between Chinese and English, Chinese expressions tend to describe a thing in a detailed way, adding more descriptive sentences, phrases and words. The unique way of expressing language is a linguistic cultural default in soft news translation. In order to conform to the English expression habits, the translator adopts the compensation strategy of reconstruction. According to the ostensive information of the original text, the author considers the cultural background and cognitive context of the target language readers, and then reduces some words to express the gist of the news. Under the guidance of relevance theory, this compensation strategy improves communication efficiency and effect, and finally achieve the optimal relevance.

4.2.3 Transliteration

Because some cultural words and images do not exist in the target language, and the translation cannot be simply translated and requires complex explanations, it is necessary to convert the pronunciation of the original text directly into the same or similar pronunciation in the target language, which is called transliteration. This method is often used in the translation of personal names, place names and some characteristic words, which might appear in linguistic cultural default, religious cultural default and social cultural default.

Example 12:

SL: 玄奘寺还供奉了几块日本战犯的佛教牌位

TL: Several Buddhist memorial tablets of Japanese war criminals had been commemorated at the Xuanzang Temple.

“玄奘” is related to Chinese Buddhism. Therefore, it is a religious cultural default when translating. The translator adopted the transliteration method when dealing with the name “玄奘”. Although “玄奘” is a unique figure in Chinese Buddhism, his popularity is quite large. Many Western readers have heard of this figure. Even if they have not heard of it, they can probably guess that it is related to Buddhism by combining the word “Temple” in the latter text. Therefore, transliteration of “玄奘” not only pays attention to the express information of the original author but also takes into account the understanding ability of the target language readers, which helps readers to make less communicative efforts to understand the meaning of the original text. When translating, it is based on ostensive-inferential communication, cognitive principle, communitive principle and the optimal relevance in relevance theory.

Example 13:

SL: 与唐代的泡茶方法不同，宋代盛行的喝茶方式是点茶。首先将热水倒在细密的茶粉上，调成糊状，然后慢慢加入更多热水，用茶筴不断击打，直到出现厚厚的泡沫。

TL: Different from the method of brewing tea during the Tang period, in the Song Dynasty, the

prevalent way of having tea was through dian cha. The process begins with hot water being poured over fine powdered tea creating a paste, then more hot water is slowly added as the tea is constantly whisked by hand with a bamboo stick.

“点茶” is a unique tea making technique in China, a social cultural default, which is difficult for foreign language readers to understand. Therefore, the translator adopts the transliteration translation method, which retains Chinese cultural characteristics and contributes to cultural exchange. At the same time, this translation method will not cause difficulties for the target language readers to understand, because combined with the following, readers can understand what is “点茶”. Therefore, the compensation strategy can prove the applicability of relevance theory in soft news translation.

4.2.4 Cultural Adaption

Cultural adaptation refers to replacing cultural information in the original text with cultural information in the target language text. There will inevitably be cultural gaps in the conversion between two languages. When the cultural default in the original text is difficult for the target language readers to understand, and the literal translation cannot convey the default information, the translator in an attempt to compensate the cultural defaults will convert the cultural content in the original text into similar cultural content in the target language.

Example 14:

SL: 通胀阴影笼罩美假日购物季，消费者不再“买买买”。

TL: Squeezed by inflation, families are tightening their holiday budgets.

“买买买” is a linguistic cultural default. To translate this soft news title, the translator adopts the translation method of cultural adaptation. The expression of “买买买” is very consistent with the cognition of Chinese people because they like to use repetition to emphasize a fact. When people hear these three words, they can't help but form a picture of reckless consumption in their mind. However, target language readers are more inclined to objectively state facts without rendering descriptions. Therefore, according to ostensive information the translator's treatment of “买买买” as “families are tightening their holiday budgets” not only helps the target language readers to better understand the original text, but also clearly expresses the original author's intention.

Example 15:

SL: 二年级教师林赛·库克称，她家第一次过上“月光族”的生活。

TL: Second-grade teacher Lindsay Cook said her family has been living paycheck to paycheck for the first time.

“月光族” is also a linguistic cultural default, which refers to a group of people who have not earned enough money each month to spend it at the beginning of the next month. It can also describe people who make little money and can barely keep up with their monthly income. Therefore, when translating the word “月光族”, the translator translates it as “paycheck to paycheck”. This translation helps to reduce the communication barriers caused by different cultural backgrounds and helps the target language readers to understand. The strategy compensates the cultural default for target readers who

can be easily to understand the meaning of the original text and pay a little effort.

Example:16

SL: 本月盖洛普民意调查显示, 55%的美国人表示物价上涨使他们囊 中羞涩, 13%的人表示经济“非常”困难。

TT: Americans said rising prices have caused financial hardship for their household, and 13% say that hardship is "severe."

“囊中羞涩” is a unique Chinese four-character idiom, which is a linguistic cultural default. “囊中羞涩” is a metaphor for financial hardship. Feeling embarrassed about not having money in one’s pocket is a euphemism for financial hardship. When translating “囊中羞涩”, the translator analyzes and understands the ostensive information of the original author and combines it with the cognitive context of the target language reader. In the end, the author translates “囊中羞涩” into “financial hardship”. This compensation strategy reduces the comprehension difficulty of target language readers, helps them fully understand the intention of the original author, and achieves the optimal relevance.

4.2.5 Transplantation

Transplantation refers to the cultural default content of the original information is transferred into the target language without any modification. Transplant compensation strategy can not only enrich the culture of the target language and promote cultural exchange and dissemination, but also benefit the development of the original culture. The use of this strategy mainly depends on the translator’s translation purpose. If the translator’s translation purpose is to promote cultural exchange, it is necessary to retain the cultural information of the source language. But in order to reduce the comprehension barrier of target language readers, translators need to ensure that target language readers are familiar with certain cultural default content to a certain extent.

Example 17:

SL: 酸奶却是大大方方, 明码标价, 童叟无欺, 被网友笑称是“土匪”。

TL: But these “superior” yogurts justify their costs and never hide their prices. Netizens hence mocked these new yogurts as “bandits”.

“土匪” is a social cultural default. The translator adopts the compensation strategy of cultural transplantation to retain the express information of the message sender. “土匪” are local armed groups or their members who rob travelers and disturb public order. On the one hand, the culture of the source language is brought into the culture of the target language, so that the foreign readers have an opportunity to contact the unique Chinese culture. On the other hand, target language readers will continue to read the following news because they are interested in “土匪”. In addition, with the deepening of international communication, many words with Chinese cultural connotations have been accepted by other countries and become part of their culture through transplantation. In short, this compensation strategy can promote cultural transmission and achieve the best communicative effect under the condition that the cognitive level of the target language readers is fully considered.

5. Conclusion

This study mainly studies cultural default and compensation in soft news from the perspective of relevance theory, which will be summarized from three aspects.

Firstly, it is found that although relevance theory is only a cognitive theory, the application of ostensive-inferential principle in translation can well explain the cultural defaults in the process of different language communication. Secondly, the study finds that there are relatively common cultural defaults in soft news. There are five types of cultural default including linguistic cultural default, social cultural default, material cultural default, ecological cultural default and religious cultural default. Finally, translators often use reconstruction, cultural adaption and transplantation when eliminating communication barriers caused by cultural default. More importantly, in view of the phenomenon of cultural default in translation process, taken by the compensation method is not the only, and may involve two or more methods of translation, in order to enhance the readability of the translation and reduce the purpose and the reader's effort, finally realizes the optimal relevance, so that the readers gain the same as the original readers effect of communication.

There are many shortcomings in this study. First of all, the database of this study is small, which cannot cover all the news that has happened, is happening or will happen. Secondly, due to the limitations of the author's own research ability, the persuasiveness and credibility of the research results of this paper are reduced in some aspects.

In view of the limitations of this study, some suggestions are given, including expanding the research database and strengthening this study of translation researchers to improve their own translation research ability. It hopes to improve the credibility and applicability of the research results.

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