

Original Paper

Comparative Study of the Cultural Connotations of Animals in China and the West from the Perspective of Intercultural Communication: Taking Chinese Zodiacs as an Example

Rongmei Yang^{1*}

¹ School of Foreign Languages, Guizhou University of Finance and Economics, Guizhou, China

* Corresponding author.

Received: June 8, 2024

Accepted: June 28, 2024

Online Published: July 3, 2024

doi:10.22158/jecs.v8n3p30

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22158/jecs.v8n3p30>

Abstract

As we know, language is a cultural carrier. Different social backgrounds and national cultures have a great effect on the cultural connotations of idiom. Along with the development and progress of human society, animal words gradually have got their established connotations in all languages. However, the connotations of animal words in one language do not necessarily coincide with those in another because of geographical environment, convention, history, and religion in different cultures. Therefore, this paper intends to take the Chinese Zodiac as a research object from a cross-cultural perspective to explore the differences in animal culture between China and the West. By comparing factors such as social customs, religious beliefs, and natural environment, explore several methods of translating animal idiom so as to promote smooth cross-cultural communication and provide references for related research.

Keywords

cross-cultural communication, Chinese Zodiac, cultural connotations

1. Introduction

With the advancement of globalization, cross-cultural communication has become an unavoidable part of our daily lives. Understanding the differences between different cultures is very important in intercultural communication, and animal culture is a good example of this. There are significant differences in the animal culture connotations between Chinese and Western cultures. Therefore, this paper aims to explore the differences in animal culture between Chinese and Western cultures from the perspective of intercultural communication and to analyze its effects and applications. Chinese Zodiacs

will be taken as a point to organize this paper and to compare different cultural connotations between China and the West. This paper also aims to find suitable translation strategies and methods through the research on animal idioms in both Eastern and Western cultures, so as to facilitate cross-cultural communication.

2. The Cultural Connotation of Animals from the Perspective of Cross-cultural Communication

In the realm of cross-cultural communication, the exploration of animal cultural connotations offers a fascinating lens through which to understand the diverse symbolic meanings attributed to animals across different societies. Animals are not merely biological entities; they are imbued with rich cultural significance that varies significantly from one culture to another. This variation is evident in the way animals are portrayed, revered, or even feared, reflecting the values, beliefs, and historical experiences of a society.

One of the most illustrative examples of animal cultural connotations can be found in the Chinese Zodiac, a system that assigns symbolic animals to each year in a 12-year cycle. The Chinese Zodiac is deeply embedded in Chinese culture and has influenced various aspects of life, including personal identity, marriage compatibility, and even business strategies. Each of the twelve animals—Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Goat, Monkey, Rooster, Dog, and Pig—carries its own set of characteristics and associations that are believed to influence the personality and destiny of individuals born in the corresponding year.

From a cross-cultural perspective, the Chinese Zodiac provides a unique opportunity to examine how animals are culturally constructed and how these constructions can lead to different interpretations and understandings. For instance, the Dragon, which is revered in Chinese culture as a symbol of power and good fortune, is viewed quite differently in Western cultures where it is often associated with malevolence and danger. This contrast highlights the importance of considering cultural context when interpreting animal symbolism and underscores the need for sensitivity and awareness in cross-cultural interactions.

2.1 Explanation of Cross-cultural Communication

Cross-cultural communication is a process of symbolic exchange and interaction based on different cultural backgrounds, with the main purpose of creating shared pathways for all parties through interaction. In fact, cross-cultural communication involves multiple levels, such as communication between people of different countries and ethnicities, as well as communication between people of various genders and professions within the same country. In cross-cultural communication, people not only need to understand the culture and customs of the language users' countries, but they also need to pay attention to etiquette issues in order to obtain more useful information in practical interaction. Additionally, cross-cultural communication can be divided into two types: verbal communication and non-verbal communication. As for verbal communication, cross-cultural communication refers to interaction and communication between people of different mother tongues. Even if the same language

is used, due to differences in the life backgrounds of the communicators, cultural differences exist in terms of cultural traditions, customs, and values. Furthermore, these factors can affect the effectiveness of cross-cultural communication and even trigger conflicts and contradictions.

2.2 Explanation of the Cultural Connotation of Animals

The connotation of animal culture in East and West refers to the cultural characteristics reflected in people's attitudes, customs, and symbolic meanings towards animals in Eastern and Western cultures. The historical development of animal culture in East and West can be traced back to ancient times, and over time, different cultures have also changed their views on animals. The main features of animal culture in East and West include: the status and role of animals are not the same in Eastern and Western cultures; there are also differences in people's attitudes towards animals; and the symbolic meanings of animals in Eastern and Western cultures are also various. The cultural significance is the expanded meaning of words that society assigns, including metaphorical, figurative, associative, symbolic, emotional, stylistic, and unique meanings. In the vast ocean of idiom, animal vocabularies usually have rich emotional connotations not only in their surface and dictionary meanings, but also in their meanings of emotion and transfer. The concepts of animal words have similar meanings in different languages around the world, but their meanings with ethnic characteristics may differ. The cultural significance of animal language has three foundations. One is to cover the appearance, physiology, psychology, personality, behavior, habits, functions, and other distinct features of animals. The second is to pay attention to the cultural connotations, cultural traditions, and cultural psychology of the country. The third is the association of animals with other animals and cultural traditions. The production of this type of association, especially in cultural psychology, plays an important role in stimulation and guidance.

2.3 Introduction of Chinese Zodiacs

The twelve Zodiac animals, also known as the twelve earthly branches, are a set of twelve animals in China that are paired with people's birth years. They include the rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, goat, monkey, rooster, dog, and pig. The origins of the Zodiac are related to animal worship. According to the unearthed Qin bamboo slips from the Yuntouze site in Yunmeng County, Hubei Province, and the Fangmatan site in Tianshui, Gansu Province, a relatively complete Zodiac system existed in the pre-Qin period (221 BC - 207 BC). Nowadays, Zodiacs are taken as a symbol of fortunate by many people, and as an ancient cultural connotation, their image also is described in poetry, Spring Festival couplets, paintings, writing, aircrafts and so on. Apart from China, many countries around the world issue Zodiac stamps during the Spring Festival period to express their blessings for the Chinese New Year.

3. Comparative Study of the Cultural Connotations of Animals in China and the West

The application of comparative analysis methods in cross-cultural communication mainly involves communication, thinking patterns, and values between different cultures. Comparing similarities and

differences between cultures aims to explore cultural differences and the resulting misunderstandings or conflicts. It further seeks effective ways to eliminate cultural differences and barriers, ultimately promoting mutual understanding and adaptation. As we know, animals are often given symbolic meanings by humans, but different cultures interpret these meanings differently. This paper will use a comparative analysis of animal symbolic meanings in Chinese and Western cultures to emphasize the cultural characteristics of animal symbolism in English and Chinese from diverse perspectives, so as to better understand the cultural differences of each nationality and promote successful cross-cultural communication. In view of there exist a sea of animals in the world, so in this paper, the Chinese Zodiacs are mainly taken as an object of study, in addition, this paper also mentions other animals as arguments.

3.1 Expression of Different Cultural Connotations with the Same Animal Idioms

In ancient China, dragon is known as a symbol of good fortune and prosperity. Its unique physical features predict that it can soar in the sky, dive into the earth, walk on the road, swim in the water, and fly in the air, thus being regarded as a divine creature capable of making clouds and rain, and omnipotent. Therefore, ancient emperors used the dragon totem as a symbol of supreme imperial power, and Chinese people also called themselves descendants as dragon. There are also some auspicious expressions related to dragons in Chinese, such as 龙腾虎跃、生龙活虎、龙凤呈祥, etc., which are inherited to this day. In contrast, in Western mythology, the dragon comes from the character of Satan in the Bible, and people call it “the great dragon”. Therefore, “dragon” is usually regarded as a symbol of evil and ferocity, and a metaphor for cruel people.

In ancient China, “oxen” were the main tool for farming and the pillar of support for ordinary farmers' livelihoods. Therefore, people have a deep emotional attachment to the term “oxen,” which is reflected in many idioms in Chinese, such as 汗牛充栋、壮实如牛 and etc. In contrast, people in English-speaking countries have a very low regard for “oxen” and some related terms carry derogatory connotations. For example, “a bull in a china shop” (鲁莽闯祸的人), “throw the bull” (胡言乱语), “calf” (比喻呆头呆脑的人), “cow” (比喻肥胖丑陋的人).

In China, people mainly raise dogs to guard their homes. Most people think that dogs are annoying, so there are many derogatory words in Chinese to describe bad things, such as 狗仗人势、狼心狗肺、狗嘴里吐不出象牙等. In contrast, in the UK, people treat dogs with great respect and intimacy. They treat dogs as family and friends, so the English language has phrases such as “a lucky dog” (幸运儿), and “every dog has its day” (凡人皆有得意日). These two completely different attitudes reflect the influence of customs and habits on language. However, it should be pointed out that English speakers do not always speak positively about dogs. They often use insults like “You dog!” (你这狗东西!), “That cur!” (那个狗东西!) and “Son of a bitch!” (狗娘养的!). But these insults do not affect the status of dogs. In the UK and the US, dogs are still regarded as “man's best friend”.

In Chinese culture, monkeys have the cultural connotations of being clever, quick-witted, and agile. The idioms related to monkeys also portray their comical and humorous nature, such as “猴子吃辣椒一

抓耳挠腮”、“孙猴子的脸-说变就变”、“孙猴子上天一得意忘形”、“孙大圣管桃园一自食其果”。The cultural connotations of monkeys in English can be summarized as having negative connotations. In Western eyes, “monkey” is a symbol of mischief, naughtiness, and often associated with a goofy, imitative, and idle image. Examples of this include “make a monkey out of someone,” which means to make someone look foolish or to play tricks on someone, “monkey business,” which means nonsense, deceit, cheating, or pranks, and “Monkey see, monkey do,” which means mechanically imitating actions without understanding. Other idioms include “monkey around,” which means fooling around or being mischievous, “monkey suit,” which means a uniform, “monkey wrench,” which means a destructive factor, “a monkey on my back,” which means a burden or an annoying person, and “put someone's monkey up,” which means to irritate someone. There are many examples of similar animal idiom having different cultural connotations in the East and West, and we will not list them one by one here, the same goes for later.

3.2 Expression of the Same Cultural Connotation using Different Animal Idioms

Similarly, different animal idioms can also reflect the same cultural connotations. For example, in English, “as strong as a horse” means “壮得像头牛” in Chinese, because Chinese people usually use oxen to plow fields, while the British prefer horses. “As strong as a horse” and “work like a horse” are often used in English to describe hardworking and diligent people because horses were the main work animals in ancient Western society and thus became a symbol of diligence and hardship. Therefore, “lion” is called the “king of the animals”. Phrases such as “regal as a lion” and “majestic as a lion” are often used to describe brave and mighty warriors. However, the tiger is revered as the king of beasts in Chinese culture, so the phrase “play oneself in the lion's mouth” means “置身虎穴” in Chinese.

The connotation of the word “rabbit” in English is timid, as indicated in expressions such as “as timid as a rabbit or as timid as a hare”. There are also other animal words that express timidity, such as “chicken-livered” or “pigeon-hearted”, but they are very different from the Chinese image of “胆小如鼠”, since “鼠” is a symbol of timidity in Chinese culture. In English, the image of mouse has become a representation of quietness, as seen in expressions like “as quiet as a mouse”. There are many animal words that differ between the two languages. In Chinese, the word “鸡” is used to refer to the animal, and to differentiate it, a modifier such as “公”, “母”, or “小” is added. In English, however, there are different words for each type of chicken, such as “chicken” (小鸡), “hen” (母鸡), “cock” (公鸡), and “rooster” (公鸡).

3.3 Expression of the Same Cultural Connotations with Same Animal Idioms in both Chinese and English Cultures

Being in two different cultural backgrounds of the East and the West, only a small portion of Chinese-English animal idioms have the same animal image and express the same cultural information. For example, the word “sheep” in Chinese and English both have the meaning of weakness, but they also have different meanings in each language. “羊” in Chinese also has the meaning of auspiciousness, such as “三羊开泰”; and in English, it has the meaning of cowardice, such as “black sheep”. In addition,

there are also some words with similar connotations. In Chinese, “猪” often gives us the impression of being foolish, clumsy, and lazy. Phrases such as “猪朋狗友”、“一龙一猪”、“指猪骂狗” all reflect people's contempt for pigs and have negative connotations. The connotations of “pig” in English are also basically the same, used to indicate a greedy, dirty or bad-mannered person(贪婪、肮脏、粗野之人)、“eat like a pig”(大吃大喝)、“make a pig of oneself”(吃得过多)、“buy a pig in a poke”(乱买东西) and so on enough to show that pigs have a poor image in the minds of Western people.

In Western culture, people believe that snakes have protective functions, such as snake-shaped objects, hanging snakeskin on the beams will protect the house from fire, kill the first snake seen in the New Year will ensure that the year is invincible. In addition, a snakeskin wrapped around a woman's waist during childbirth will be smoother, and some people believe that snakeskin can cure headaches; putting a snake tooth on the body can reduce fever, and bring good luck when gambling, and so on. In China, people also have a reverent attitude towards snakes. People believe that after growing for hundreds of years, the snake grows a cockle-like thing on its head, so the snake has a spiritual nature and cannot be harmed, otherwise it will be bad luck. There are also snakes found at home is a symbol of good luck, also cannot be harmed.

In Chinese words, “蜜蜂” often represent hard work and busyness; “鸟儿” symbolize freedom and unconstraint. Similarly, there are similar expressions in English animals, such as “as busy as a bee” and “as free as a bird.” Both in Chinese and the West, Using a lamb to represent gentleness, parrots to represent mimicry, a rooster to represent “pride”, “pigeon” in English and “鸽子” in Chinese both symbolize peace or love for peace, and the Chinese even call “和平鸽”. For example, “fox” in English can be used to refer to a “sly old fox”, and in Chinese, people often say “他是只狐狸”, “Wolf” in English also has the meaning of “好色的男子”, and in Chinese, there is also the term “色狼”. “Ass” in English is a stupid animal, and in Chinese, we have the saying “蠢驴”. These examples vividly express the characteristics of animals while also conveying the same cultural connotations.

3.4 Without Corresponding Words in Chinese and English for the Same Animal Idioms

The same animal word has rich cultural connotations in English but not in Chinese. Chinese people like cats, and use “馋猫” to describe people who love to eat, often with affectionate tones, without rich cultural connotations, while in Western culture, black cats are often associated with witches. It is said that black cats have nine lives, and “a cat has nine lives”. It is said that witches have magic to transform into black cats nine times. If a person kills a black cat, it can still resurrect eight times. Therefore, black cats are associated with bad luck in Western culture, and Westerners are superstitious, believing that “if a black cat crosses your path, it brings bad luck.” (若见到黑猫从面前经过,便会遭到不幸) Cat has rich cultural connotations in English. In English mythology, cats can even affect weather changes, such as “to rain cats and dogs” (倾盆大雨) and “The cat has a gale of wind in her tail” (这猫尾巴里有一阵大风). Expressions related to cats also include “old cat” (脾气坏的老太婆), “cat around” (寻花问柳), “let the cat out of the bag” (泄露秘密), and “cats hide their claws” (知人知面不知心).

In addition, the word “elephant” (大象) in English culture is not just a idiom for an animal, but it also

has rich cultural connotations. People usually use it to metaphorically refer to wisdom and dullness. However, in Chinese, the understanding of elephants is only as a type of giant mammal. “Beavers” are mainly found in North America and are rarely seen in China. They are often active and have the habit of gnawing trees and building nests. In terms of nest-building, they have high skills and originality. Therefore, they are called “eager beaver” (卖力的河狸). However, in Chinese there is no metaphorical or associative meanings for the word “beaver”, it is simply its literal meaning.

In English, the word “turkey” (火鸡) has rich connotations, such as “talk turkey” (打开天窗说亮话); and “cold turkey” (突然停止). However, in Chinese, the word “火鸡” only refers to a type of animal, without any connotative meanings. Similarly, the word “bull” (牛) in English is used to describe a rude and clumsy person, while “chicken” (鸡) refers to a coward; “Eel” (鳝鱼) is often used to refer to a cunning, unreliable person, but in Chinese, these words do not have these connotations.

3.5 The same animal idioms in Chinese with rich cultural connotations while Western not

For example, the “蚕” (silkworm) holds a high place in the hearts of Chinese people due to the influence of the ancient Silk Road. Li Shangyin's (an famous poet in ancient China) poem, “春蚕到死丝方尽, 蜡炬成灰泪始干” extolled the silkworm's spirit of dedication. In contrast, in Western eyes, “silkworm” is just a type of insect without rich cultural connotations. Similarly, the “鹤” (crane) is a symbol of longevity in Chinese culture, and it is often used in paintings and patterns with pine trees to represent “longevity.” However, in Western culture, a crane does not hold this connotation. As for the turtle, it has two symbolic meanings in Chinese culture: one is the symbol of longevity, and the other is a metaphor for husbands having extramarital affairs. It is a kind of great insult for calling one as “王八” or “王八蛋”. In Western culture, the turtle is simply a slow-moving animal. “鸳鸯” (mandarin duck), a type of water bird that always appears in pairs, also has a different connotation in Chinese culture, representing a happy marriage and in China these idioms “棒打鸳鸯”、“鸳鸯被”、“鸳鸯戏水” are also known for everyone. However, in English, the mandarin duck (鸳鸯) lacks such cultural connotations.

3.6 Expression Gap

Idiom gap refers to the situation where a word in one language has no semantic equivalent in another language, or although there is a corresponding expression, it is not a fixed term. In some English works, there are often legends about animals. Many of these animals in the legends represent the gods in ancient Greek and Roman mythology. Although only a small part, these animal vocabularies are missing in Chinese. Similarly, in ancient Chinese legends, some animals known to Chinese people are also missing in English, such as 麒麟(麋身牛星)、九星狐(九条星巴的狐狸)、疆休(龙头马身招财之兽) and so on..

4. An Exploration of Factors Affecting Cultural Differences in Animal Culture between China and the West

The differences in animal culture between the East and the West are a result of various factors, including history, geography, religion, and cultural traditions and ways of thinking. Different historical

cultures have specific connections to certain animal idioms, carrying different cultural connotations. For example, “龙” (dragon) are a totem in China and are considered a magical animal that can bring rain and clouds. Dragon culture has a history of approximately 6,000 years in China, and Chinese people all consider themselves as “龙的传人”. Throughout Chinese history, dragons have symbolized power and dignity. Chinese emperors referred to themselves as “真龙天子” and wore dragon robes and sat on dragon thrones. Dragons are also frequently used in Chinese names, such as Zhu Geliang, who was called “卧龙”, and the military general Zhao Yun, who was known as “常山赵子龙” during Three Kingdoms Period(220-228BC).

4.1 Different Geographical Environments

China has always been an agricultural country, and farmers have always relied on oxen to plow the fields, so there is a deep affection for cattle. “老黄牛” is used to describe people who endure humiliation and are willing to contribute. Everyone is familiar with the poem by Lu Xun (a great writer in ancient China), “俯首甘为孺子牛” and there “孺子牛” is used to metaphorically refer to people who are willing to serve the people. The natural geographical environment of Western countries is very different from that of China. Take the UK, for example, it is a four-sided island country with mountainous terrain that is not suitable for farming activities. People's daily lives are closely related to the ocean and water. The UK's unique geographical location (surrounded by the sea on all sides) and natural conditions (temperate oceanic climate) have nurtured developed fishing and animal husbandry industries, which have also had an important impact on the formation and development of English idioms. English idioms related to fish can be seen everywhere, such as “dull fish” (枯燥乏味的人), “big fish” (大亨), “fish in the air” (白费力), “neither fish nor fowl” (非驴非马), “fish in troubled water” (浑水摸鱼).

4.2 Different Religious Beliefs

The formation and development of Chinese culture was mainly influenced by Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism. For example, when people encounter a great kindness that they cannot repay in this life, they will say, “来生做牛做马来回报你的恩情” and Chinese religious beliefs are also reflected in idioms such as “牛头马面”、“人面兽心”、“放下屠刀，立地成佛”. On the other hand, in Western countries, where Christianity is the main religion, people are deeply influenced by the Bible, Jesus and Christ, and many idioms in this regard have emerged, such as “God bless you” (上帝保佑你); “Man proposes, God disposes” (成事在人，谋事在天); “A man without religion is a hoarse without bridle”; “A man without religion is a hoarse without bridle” (人无宗教犹如马无笼头).

4.3 Different Ways of Thinking

Chinese people tend to have intuitive and concrete patterns of thinking, while Westerners tend to have rational and abstract patterns. In other words, Chinese people like to use concrete images to express abstract concepts, while Westerners do the opposite. For example, the English idiom “Nothing venture, Nothing gain” has the same cultural meaning as the Chinese saying “不入虎穴，焉得虎子”. In Chinese, the concrete and observable images of “虎穴”和“虎子” are used to express this abstract

concept.

5. The Influence and Application of Cultural Differences in Animals between China and the West

The previous sections use the Chinese Zodiac as an example to introduce the cultural differences between the Chinese Zodiac and the corresponding animals in the West. Differences are an important factor that affects cross-cultural communication. This section briefly introduces the impact of cultural differences between the East and the West on cross-cultural communication and gives several feasible translation methods.

5.1 The Impact of Cultural Differences in Animal Culture between China and the West on Cross-cultural Communication

In the business field, understanding the cultural differences of animals between China and the West can help both sides to better conduct business negotiations and cooperation. For example, in China, pigs are regarded as symbols of happiness and wealth, so it is common to give them as gifts to business partners or customers. However, in Western culture, pigs are often seen as dirty and unclean animals, so such gifts may be misunderstood or offend the recipient.

In the education field, understanding the cultural differences of animals between China and the West can help teachers better understand students' cultural backgrounds and values, and teach better. For example, in Western countries, teachers may use animal images such as dogs and cats to motivate students, while in China, teachers may use traditional cultural symbols such as dragons and phoenixes to motivate students.

In the tourism field, understanding the cultural differences of animals between China and the West can help tourists better understand the local culture and customs, and avoid causing cultural conflicts. For example, at some tourist attractions in China, tourists may see some performance-type animal shows, such as panda shows, and tiger shows. However, in Western culture, such performances may be seen as animal abuse, so tourists need to understand the local cultural background to avoid unnecessary harm to local people and animals. It can be seen that in cross-cultural communication, if one does not understand the cultural connotations of animal idiom in the other culture, it is difficult to understand its true meaning, and even lead to misunderstandings and conflicts. Therefore, understanding the cultural differences of animals between China and the West is particularly important for cross-cultural communication.

5.2 An Analysis of Translation Strategies for the Cultural Connotations of Animal Idioms in English and Chinese

The purpose of translation is to input all the information of the source language into the translated language, and at the same time to achieve the maximum equivalent effect. Specifically in the translation of English Chinese animal idiom, it is necessary to take the national culture as the basis, without causing misunderstanding and affecting the readers' understanding, and pay attention to conveying the cultural meanings of different animals in the native language and accurately reflecting

their images in the translated language. The following are some specific strategies to deal with the English Chinese translation of animal idioms.

Literal translation. Literal translation refers to preserving the metaphorical imagery and ethnic colors of the original text on the basis of complying with the standardization of the translated language, without causing erroneous associations or misunderstandings, such as:

as fat as a pig (肥得像猪一样)

as gentle as a lamb (温和得像羊羔一样)

as proud as peacock (骄傲得像孔雀一样)

as slow as a snail (像蜗牛一样慢)

as happy as a lark (像百灵鸟一样快乐)

one swallow does not make a spring (孤燕不成春)

He who rides a tiger is afraid to dismount. (骑虎难下)

He that hath been bitten by a serpent is an afraid of rope. (一朝被蛇咬，十年怕井绳)

This kind of translation is not only conducive to the cultural exchange between English and Chinese, but also can enrich the target language.

Free translation. Due to the influence of cultural differences, when the translator cannot retain the literal meaning of the source language and must give up the original meaning for the purpose of making the translation match the original content and having similar language functions, in this way translator should adopt the method of free translation in order to conform to the way of thinking, aesthetic psychology and expression habits of the readers of the target language. The free translation method does not stick to the original form or detach from the original image, but focuses on correctly express the content of the original text, such as:

have a bee in one's bonnet (胡思乱想)

as sick as a cat/dog (病得很重，直想呕吐)

the lion's share (最大的部分，绝大部分)

Borrowing translation. English and Chinese are both languages with a long history, both with rich idiom related to animals. However, due to cultural differences between English and Chinese, an image expressed by a certain animal in one language may have to be expressed by a different animal image in the other language. This requires the use of borrowing translation method, such as:

black sheep of the family (害群之马)

a cat on hot bricks (热锅上的蚂蚁)

a drawn rat (落汤鸡)

like a duck to water (如鱼得水)

as timid as a hare (胆小如鼠)

Love me, love my dog. (爱屋及乌)

The danger is certainly a lion in the path; you can go ahead or turn back. (危险当然是拦路虎，你可以选择上前或往回走)

From the above examples, it can be seen that the advantage of the borrowing translation method is that it considers both the national characteristics and language structure of the language, as well as reflecting the cultural background and expression habits of the target language. This gives readers a vivid and intimate feeling, making it more popular and easier to understand.

6. Conclusion

This paper explores the cultural differences between Eastern and Western animal culture from a cross-cultural perspective, focusing on the Chinese zodiac as the research object. The paper describes the differences between Eastern and Western animals, and the reasons behind these differences, and proposes some animal translation techniques that can be used for reference. Although there is already considerable research on the cultural significance of animals in both Eastern and Western cultures, there is still a lack of research that explores the differences from a cross-cultural communication standpoint and links them to translation strategies. While this paper touches on the subject, there is still room for improvement and further research.

A comparison of Eastern and Western animal cultures from a cross-cultural perspective has significant implications. Firstly, it can promote communication and exchange between Eastern and Western cultures, allowing people to better understand each other's cultural differences and similarities and deepen mutual respect and understanding. Secondly, it can broaden people's cultural horizons and help them better understand the diversity of cultures in the world, thereby deepening their awareness of human civilization. Finally, it can enrich cultural connotations, promote cultural innovation and development, and contribute to the sustainable development of human society. All of these have an important role in promoting cross-cultural communication and advancing translation but enhancing cross-cultural communication skills and improving translation proficiency remain a long-term challenge.

References

- Li Qiurong, & Li Xinxin. (2016). Study on the cultural connotation and translation strategies of animal idiom. *Overseas English*, (10), 82-84.
- Li Jing. (2010). *Research and Teaching of Chinese Cultural Idiom from a Cross-cultural Perspective*. Shanghai: Fudan University.
- Meng Huan. (2015). Cultural Connotation Differences in Chinese and English Animal Idiom. *Chizi* (Early to mid-month), (01), 126.
- Shang Xiuye. (2008). The Influence of Cultural Connotations in Chinese and English Animal Idiom on Cross-cultural Communication. *Journal of Taiyuan University of Science and Technology*, (02), 133-135.
- Wang Wei. (2023). A Study of China's Cultural Communication Strategies from a Perspective of Cross-cultural Communication. *Cultural Industries*, (08), 73-75.

- Xu Juan. (2005). *Differences in the Cultural Connotations of Animal Idiom in Chinese and English*. Hubei: Central China Normal University.
- Yao Liping. (2006). *A Cross-cultural Comparison of the Cultural Connotations of English and Chinese Animal Idiom*. Hebei: Hebei Normal University.
- Zhang Yueli. (2013). *A Study of the Cultural Differences in Zodiac Animal Idiom between China and the West and Teaching Strategies*. Jiangsu: Suzhou University.
- Zheng Ping. (2014). A Comparison of English and Chinese Animal Idioms: Cultural Differences Between Eastern and Western Cultures. *Journal of Mudanjiang Education College*, (10), 30-31.
- Zhou Anman. (2021). The Cultural Connotations and Translation Strategies of the Zodiac Animal Idiom in China and the West. *Jinguwen Creative*, (02), 112-113.
- Zhu Jun. (2003). *A Study of the Cultural Connotations and Translation of English and Chinese Animal Idiom from a Perspective of Cross-cultural Communication*. Hubei: Central China Normal University.