Original Paper

A Study on English Translation Strategies of Culture-Loaded Words

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Abstract

The term "culture-loaded words" is a sign of national culture, which means that the distinctive national culture is directly or indirectly reflected in the language vocabulary. The purpose of this paper is to examine and analyze the characteristics of the translation strategies used by Howard Goldblatt in his translation The Song of King Gesar, which reflects the unique culture of Chinese ethnic minorities, in order to provide a academic perspective combining qualitative and quantitative research on the translation strategies of culture-loaded words, so as to make a modest contribution to the promotion of linguistic and cultural exchanges between China and the West. According to Nida's classification criteria of cultural types, culture-loaded words can be divided into five major categories: "economic culture-loaded word, material culture-loaded word, social culture-loaded word, religious culture-loaded word, linguistic culture-loaded word". At present, most of the studies on the translation methods of culture-loaded words adopt the method of qualitative research, namely analyzing the translation methods of individual translation cases in the research object according to the theory. Therefore, this paper adopts a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis methods to study the culture-loaded words in The Song of King Gesar based on the corpus.

Key words

Culture-loaded words, Translation Strategies, Quantitative Research

1. Introduction

After Red Poppies won the Fifth Mao Dun Literature Prize, Chinese Tibetan writer Alai has received increasing attention. In 2009, Alai took participated in the world's first transnational publishing cooperation project, "Rewriting Myths", initiated by the British Canongate Publishing House. This project involved renowned publishers from over thirty countries and regions and was dubbed the "Little

Nobel Series". The series comprised of authors who were Nobel Prize, Booker Prize winners, and bestselling authors. Taking this opportunity, Alai created a long novel King Gesar, based on the orally transmitted stories of King Gesar among the Tibetan people. The book was published simultaneously in six languages, further highlighting Alai's importance in contemporary Chinese literature. Alai's retelling of the myth King Gesar, as the only minority representative work in China's current series of myth retellings, showcased the rich and mysterious ethnic historical myths of Chinese ethnic minorities with its unique Tibetan style and characteristics.

In 2013, *King Gesar* was translated into English by the famous American sinologist Howard Goldblatt and his wife Sylvia Li-chun Lin. However, despite the rich ethnic cultural connotations in the book, recent years have seen few translation reviews of Goldblatt's translation, and even fewer studies on the translation of cultural-loaded words. Therefore, the detailed characteristics of the translation of cultural-loaded words in Goldblatt's version and the effects of Goldblatt's translation strategies are still issues that need further exploration. Based on this, this paper aims to explore the translation of cultural-loaded words in the English translation of *King Gesar* through the objective and scientific tool of corpus, hoping to provide a reference for the translation of contemporary Chinese ethnic minority literary works in the English-speaking world.

2. Research Method

Using a variety of inductive observational methods, Toury's Descriptive Translation Studies is away from the preoccupations of prescriptive notions of equivalence vis-a-vis the source text (Toury, 2012), which has become a popular research paradigm in translation studies. Hence, the study follows the footsteps of the observational approach of Descriptive Translation Studies to figure out the changes in narrative structure resulting from the deletions in the English translation of Alai's *King Gesar*.

Based on the research objective and the requirements of Descriptive Translation Studies, a comprehensive data collection of the deletions throughout the text should be conducted first, so that to summarize the overall situation of deletions. As an emerging empirical research method, corpus has progressively become a crucial tools in both theoretical and practical translation studies. Descriptive Translation Studies with the aid of corpus can significantly mitigate the subjectivity of qualitative analysis, rendering research more objective and scientific.

The source text for the construction of the parallel corpus is Alai's *King Gesar*, published by Chongqing Publishing House in 2009. The content is derived from the oral transmission of the King Gesar epic by the Tibetan people, encompassing the Tibetan people's journey from primitive tribal alliances to the formation of a nation, which includes the story of Gesar's birth as the son of a deity, his battles against demons, the stabilization of the three realms, and his eventual return to the heavens. The English translation is *The Song of King Gesar*, published by Canongate Books in 2013, and translated by Howard Goldblatt and his wife, Sylvia Li-chun Lin. Alai's original *King Gesar* contains 246,863 Chinese characters, while the translation version, *The Song of King Gesar*, uses 115,017 English words.

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The corpus construction process is as follows:

The process of constructing the bilingual parallel corpus is as follows: To start with, the TXMALL Aligner online corpus tool is utilized for initial alignment to create a parallel corpus containing both the source text and the target text. Due to differences between Chinese and English, the automatically generated Chinese and English segments can not correspond exactly, resulting in a single Chinese sentence matching multiple English sentences. Therefore, during the alignment of the parallel corpus, the primary standard is the completeness of the English sentences, matching basically consistent units in terms of meaning in Chinese, and splitting the Chinese sentences accordingly. In the aligned bilingual parallel corpus, English appears in the form of complete sentences ending with periods, question marks, or exclamation points, while Chinese segments may appear in various forms, including commas, semicolons, and periods. The concrete examples are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Examples of Segments in The Parallel Corpus

Number	Source Text	Target Text
76	那时家马与野马刚刚分开。历史学家说，家马与野马未曾分开是前蒙昧时代，家马与野马分开不久是后蒙昧时代。历史学家还说，在绝大多数情形下，"后"时代的人们往往都比"前"时代的人们更感到自己处于恐怖与迷茫之中。的确是这样，后蒙昧时代，人与魔住在下界，神却已经住在天上去了。	It was the time when domesticated horses separated from their wild counterparts, and when the deities went up to live in Heaven while the demons stayed in this world.
173	这时，那些对于魔鬼的折磨早都逆来顺受的老百姓都在传说，上天要来拯救他们了。好消息非但没使人们高兴起来，反倒惹出了一片悲怨之声。有嘴不把门的老太婆甚至在呜呜哭泣的时候骂了起来："该死的，	The people said to each other that Heaven would come to their aid, but a resentful old woman sobbed: 'Damn them!
653	牵上最好的马匹，备好最舒适的肩舆，快快前去迎接！"	Take the finest horses and the most comfortable palanquin to greet him.
665	若不以温暖的光芒沐浴众生，徒然运行有何用？	What is the point of turning if it cannot warm the lives below?

After three rounds of verification, the final dataset includes 9,430 Chinese-English aligned segments in the constructed parallel corpus. Based on Nida's (Nida, 1993) five categories of culture, the culture-loaded words in the original text are identified and marked in Table 2, which is composed of 482 words: ecological terms (54), material culture terms (53), religious terms (189), social culture terms (72), and linguistic terms (114). Through detailed observation and analysis, the translation method is categorized into two strategies: in terms of foreignization, transliteration and literal translation are used; in terms of domestication, translation method can be further divided into five types, including explanation, substitution, addition, reduction, and combination. Quantitative analysis is then performed with each translation method marked in the translation segment. Afterwards, the data is processed using Excel to calculate proportions. Finally, a qualitative analysis is conducted on these culture-loaded words to compare the effectiveness of the translations in conveying the original meaning and to explore the choice of translation strategies for culture-loaded words.

Table 2. Quantitative Analysis Parameters for the Translation Methods of Cultural-Loaded Words in The Song of King Gesar

Translation Strategy	Translation Method	Ecology	Material	Religion	Society	Language	Totaling	Proportion		Rank
Domestication	Reduction	2	3	6	3	2	16	3.32%		5
	Explanation	4	12	31	13	45	105	21.78%		3
	Addition			4		1	5	2.07%	53.11%	8
	Substitution	21	13	53	10	18	115	23.86%		2
	Combination		2	6	3	4	15	3.11%		7
Foreignization	Literal Translation	15	16	85	23	36	175	36.31%	43.57%	1
	Transliteration	10	1	4	17	3	35	7.26%		4
Omission		2	6	-	3	5	16	3.32%	3.32%	5
Totaling		54	53	189	72	114	482	-	-	-

3. Discussion

Translation strategies are the overarching principles that guide translators during the translation process (Zhang, 1986). In academic circles, both domestically and internationally, there is no consensus on the specific definition of translation strategies. Venuti has classified translation strategies into two types: domestication and foreignization. Thus, this study will conduct the analysis of the specific strategies used by Howard Goldblatt in translating culture-loaded words in *The Song of King Gesar* with Venuti's definition.

According to Venuti , the foreignization strategy has several advantages: (1) It introduces the language structure, expressions, poetic features, and cultural elements of the source language into the target language, enriching its expression and promoting its development; (2) It enables target language readers to appreciate and understand the exotic flavor, thereby enhancing cultural exchange between different nations; (3) When translating from a weaker to a stronger language, foreignization can resist cultural colonization and hegemony, highlighting the cultural identity of the weaker nation. However, the foreignization strategy can affect readability, making translations seem stiff and unnatural, thus impacting their acceptance and dissemination (Venuti, 1986).

Different from what has been introduced above, the domestication strategy ensures the translation is smooth, natural, and easily understood, making it readily accepted by target language readers and meeting specific needs. However, it can result in the loss of the source text's language, literary, and cultural elements, depriving readers of the chance to appreciate the exotic culture. This loss does not benefit the enrichment and development of the target language's culture or promote intercultural exchange. Furthermore, in translating from a weaker to a stronger language, domestication can reinforce cultural colonization and hegemony, weakening the cultural identity of the weaker nation (Venuti, 1986).

In summary, the foreignization strategy aims to faithfully introduce the source language culture, while the domestication strategy enhances the text's acceptability in the target language culture. According to Table 1, Goldblatt used domestication strategy in 53.11% of cases when translating culture-loaded words in *The Song of King Gesar*, compared to 43.57% for foreignization. This data supports Goldblatt's assertion that "translation values the expression of the original text rather than the elegant effect that moves people" (Fang, 2011).

However, the small difference in the usage of foreignization and domestication suggests that their complementarity is key to Goldblatt's successful translation. To enhance readability and acceptance in the West, Goldblatt uses domestication, but for words with strong cultural connotations, he employs foreignization to faithfully present oriental language features and thinking habits, allowing readers from different cultures to experience the exotic charm. Thus, the author plans to analyze the detailed characteristics of each translation method based on the frequency of use, as shown in Table 2.

3.1 Literal Translation

Based on the statistical results in Table 2, it can be found that the most frequently used translation method by Goldblatt is literal translation, a type of foreignization strategy, with 175 occurrences, accounting for 36.31%, especially in translating religious culture-loaded words (85 occurrences). Literal translation preserves the cultural characteristics and exotic flavor of the original text, which can be categorized into the following three types:

3.1.1 Fully Successful Literal Translation

The term "人牲" is translated as "human sacrifice" in the text. According to the original meaning of the term, it refers to the custom in the late primitive society and the slave society period where living

people were killed as offerings to ancestors (human spirits), deities, or all things in nature. It is evident that this translation retains the original term's form while conveying its underlying connotation, making it a successful translation.

In addition, the term "凡界" is translated into "the human world", which refers to the world of ordinary human life, in contrast to the realms of deities and the heavens. "凡界" is also called "the human world", representing the mundane existence and secular affairs of humanity.

"神山" is translated into "sacred mountain", which refers to mountains believed to be inhabited by deities in legends. For example, Kunlun Mountain, Hua Mountain, and Tai Mountain in Chinese Taoism and folklore are considered "神山", where deities reside, serving as places for spiritual cultivation and gaining divine power.

"金座" is translated into "golden seat", which typically refers to a seat or throne adorned with gold, symbolizing supreme status and authority. In Buddhism, "金座" can also refer to the seat of a Buddha or Bodhisattva, representing sanctity and reverence.

"龙宫" is translated into "the Dragon fortress", which is the palace of the Dragon King and his retinue, located at the bottom of the sea or river according to legend. "龙宫" is filled with countless treasures and has a beautiful, fairyland-like environment. The Dragon King is considered the deity governing the waters, and "龙宫" is his residence.

"山神" is translated into "the mountain god", which refers to the deities that govern mountains. In Chinese Taoism and folk beliefs, each mountain has a protector, believed to bless the land and water, ward off evil, and prevent disasters.

"仙山" is translated into "magical mountain", which refers to mountains where immortals are said to live. These mountains are often described as having beautiful environments and abundant spiritual energy, making them ideal places for immortals to cultivate and reside. Examples include the three Taoist "仙山" of Penglai, Fangzhang, and Yingzhou.

"福地" is translated into "a blessed place", which refers to places with blessings and spiritual energy, considered excellent for cultivation and residence. "福地" in Chinese often suggests beautiful environments and abundant resources, making them ideal locations for living and spiritual practice.

Hence, it can be seen that the author has directly translated some terms that reflect the pursuit and imagination of nature, deities, and ideal life in traditional Chinese culture. In these cases, the translator's work has achieved relatively successful results, preserving the original expression while conveying the cultural connotations.

3.1.2 Partially Successful Literal Translation

Apart from the aforementioned successful direct translations, there are several instances of partially successful direct translations within *The Song of King Gesar*. For example, the translation of the term "化缘" is partially successful. The term "化缘" usually refers to the act of monks soliciting food and alms to form good relationships. In addition, this term also encompasses all fundraising activities for Buddhist purposes, not limited to begging for food. Howard Goldblatt's direct translation of "化缘" as

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"seek alms" conveys only part of the original term's meaning and fails to fully capture its depth. Additionally, "化缘" is associated with the pilgrimage practices in Tibetan Buddhism. During their pilgrimage to temples, especially the Jokhang Temple in Lhasa, lamas or devotees solicit food from Buddhist or benevolent families to support their journey. The hardships endured by these devotees and their profound devotion to Bodhisattvas are challenging for Western readers to fully grasp. It is widely recognized that the Tibetan people are profoundly influenced by Buddhism, with its teachings and rituals deeply integrated into their daily lives. The Tibetan community exhibits immense devotion to Buddhism, with many spending years on pilgrimage and even offering all their possessions to the Bodhisattvas. Without understanding Tibetan Buddhism, one cannot fully appreciate Tibetan culture or the lifestyle and customs of the Tibetan people. Therefore, the term "化缘" carries significant Buddhist connotations, evoking the arduous nature of Tibetan pilgrimages and their deep religious devotion. However, Goldblatt's translation does not adequately convey these Buddhist connotations and the cultural practices of the Tibetan people as presented in the original text.

3.1.3 Unsuccessful Literal Translation

Furthermore, some direct translations even fail to capture the connotations within the original context. For instance, the term "道行" is a common religious cultural terminology, which is explained in the sixth edition of the *Modern Chinese Dictionary* as the cultivation and practice of monks and Taoists [6]. It can also broadly refer to a person's moral cultivation, ability, and skill. In the *King Gesar*, the source text is: "昆塔喇嘛，他自己道行应该很深吧，可跟着他的人得不到好处，在这个地方上说不上话。" In other words, the sentence means that Kunta Lama, his own spiritual practice should be profound, but the people who follow him do not benefit, they have no say in this place." Here, "道行" pertains to Kunta Lama, with "Lama" being an honorific title for Tibetan Buddhist monks. Thus, the term "道行" is placed within the cultural context of Tibetan Buddhism. However, Goldblatt translated the term as "Taoist skills", erroneously associating it with Taoism. Given the significant differences in belief systems, concepts, and practices between Taoism and Buddhism, such a conflation is inappropriate and misleading.

3.2 Replacement

According to the statistics, the second most common translation method after direct translation is the replacement method, used 115 times, accounting for 23.86%, and widely applied in the translation of ecological cultural terms (21). Table 3 presents examples of replacement method in the translation.

Table 3. Examples of Replacement Method in The Translation of *King Gesar*

Number	Source Text	Target Text
1	青稞	barley
2	杜鹃花	azalea
3	酥油草	fescue

4	艾蒿	artemisia
5	蒺藜	maces
6	野刺梨	chestnuts, roses
7	茴香籽	anise seeds
8	鹰鹞	harrier hawk
9	桫椤花	fern
10	五谷	crops
11	龙胆	gentians

Different countries' geographical locations and living environments vary greatly, which can lead to the emergence of distinct cultures. Ecocological cultural terms, is composed of numerous factors such as ecological environment, climate change, and geographical features, which are understood and perceived differently by people from various countries due to cultural differences. The language in *King Gesar* is very distinctive, filled with expressions rich in plateau-specific flora and fauna, such as "青稞", "酥油草", "龙胆", etc. It is the presence of these rich vocabularies that allow readers to instantly immerse in an imaginative space, experiencing the ethnic characteristics and social customs of the Tibetan people, and enjoying a unique aesthetic experience. Despite the different historical backgrounds between China and English-speaking countries, with distinct cultures in clothing, diet, and architecture, equivalent terms for flora and fauna in eco-cultural terms can be found in English. Therefore, Goldblatt extensively used the replacement method when translating these terms. This is because, although there are huge differences in the ecological climate and geographical environment between China and the West, people share a similar knowledge framework regarding the earth's flora and fauna, allowing for the use of equivalent terms with the same cultural references.

3.3 Explanation

Besides, it is found that Goldblatt used the explanation method 105 times, accounting for 21.78%, ranking third. This method is suitable for instances where there is no corresponding word in English, and the Chinese original can not be replaced with a synonym or near-synonym, necessitating a semantic explanation. For example, the original term "三昧真火" was translated into "three true fires-air, stone, and wood", simply explaining the term but not giving the reason that why fire is categorized into wood fire, stone fire, and air fire. In fact, "三昧真火" is a term from Chinese Taoist culture. Although the translation is concise and does not convey the richer cultural connotations of the original language, it explains part of the meaning and contributes to not disrupting the reader's rhythm, maintaining the enjoyment of reading.

However, the explanation method does not achieve the desired positive effects in all instances. For example, the translator's rendering of "初八", "the eighth day of a crescent moon", differs from the traditional translation "the eighth day of the lunar month". The traditional translation is more straightforward and conveys the main information directly. Although Goldblatt's version enhances the

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literary aesthetic of the work, it might also cause comprehension issues for Western readers who are unfamiliar with the lunar calendar. This discrepancy in translation outcomes contrasts with the intended purpose of explanation translation.

Additionally, the term "三四个时辰" is mistranslated as "nearly four hours". The translator attempted to explain the original text accurately, understanding "三四个" as a vague concept and modifying it with "nearly". However, the term "时辰", with its rich cultural connotations, is mistakenly translated as "hours". "时辰" is a unique time unit in ancient China, equivalent to two hours. By using "an hour" to replace "时辰", the accuracy is lost, and the unique cultural elements of China's long history are erased, leaving Western readers with a Tibetan story narrated in Western cultural terms.

Therefore, when translating culturally loaded terms, especially when employing explanation translation method, it is crucial to conduct thorough research and understanding of the cultural background and connotations inherent in the original text. This approach is not only conducive to ensuring the accuracy and consistency of the translation but also effectively preventing readers from encountering further misunderstandings and confusion. Through precise cultural interpretation, translators can preserve the emotional and contextual essence of the original work, thereby enhancing the inspirational value of the translated text and providing clearer and deeper insights for cross-cultural communication.

3.4 Transliteration

According to the statistics in the Table 2, transliterated cultural terms are phonetically translated from Chinese or Tibetan into corresponding English. As the most faithful translation method to the original text, transliteration can retain the flavor of the original language to the greatest extent. The culture-loaded words in *The Song of King Gesar* that are transliterated can be divided into three categories: people names, place names and titles.

Table 4. Examples of Translations of People Name in *The Song of Gesar*

Number	Source Text	Target Text
1	觉如	Juru
2	晋美	Jigmed
3	晁通	Khrothung
4	玉杰	Yukye
5	珠牡	Brugmo
6	森伦	Senglon
7	江穆萨	Rkayngmusar
8	汤东杰布	Thangtong Gyalpo
9	绒察查根	Rongtsa Khragan
10	梅朵娜泽	Metog Lhartse
11	贡布惹扎	Mgonpo Redag

12	崔巴噶瓦	Thosba Gawa
13	曲潘纳布	Qupan Nabu
14	嘉察协噶	Gyatsa Zhakar

Table 5. Examples of Translations of People Name in *The Song of Gesar*

Number	Source Text	Target Text
1	康巴	Khampapa
2	金沙江	the Jinsha river
3	雅砻江	the Yarlung river
4	怒江	the Nu river
5	玛杰邦日山	Mount Machen Bomra
6	澜沧江	the Lancang river
7	五台山	Mount Wutai
9	岭噶	Gling

Table 6. Examples of Translations of Titles in *The Song of Gesar*

Number	Source Text	Target Text
1	喇嘛	Lama
2	卓玛	Drolma
3	罗刹	yaksas
4	仲肯	grungkan

In the discussion of translation practice, especially when dealing with words containing rich cultural connotations, transliteration as a basic translation strategy can retain the phonetic features of the original words to some extent. However, it often fails to fully convey the profound cultural implications and historical background behind them. Examples include religious terms and idiomatic expressions, whose meanings far exceed their literal sense. For target language readers, mere transliteration may present comprehension barriers, failing to evoke cultural resonance or achieve accurate transmission of cultural information.

In this context, the combination strategy of transliteration plus annotation becomes particularly important and necessary. This method not only retains the phonetic form of the original word but also further elucidates the deep meaning, cultural background, or historical origin through additional annotations. This helps target readers bridge cultural gaps and better understand and appreciate the essence of the original text. For instance, Goldblatt demonstrated exquisite skill in translating *The Song of King Gesar* where he cleverly rendered the religiously and culturally rich term "法号" as "fahao, one's Buddhist appellation". Here, "fahao" as the transliterated part retains the original pronunciation,

while "one's Buddhist appellation" serves as an annotation, clearly explaining the specific meaning of "法号" in Buddhist culture, which is the Buddhist name of a monk or high monk. This approach significantly enhances the readability and cultural transmission effectiveness of the translation.

Based on this, the author deeply feels that mere transliteration is insufficient when translating words involving significant heterogeneous cultural information. It must be supplemented with annotations or other innovative translation techniques to highlight their cultural connotations. The form of annotation can be flexible and diverse. It can be direct annotations within the text, immediately adding explanatory text in the translation to maintain reading coherence. Alternatively, it can be endnotes or footnotes, suitable for providing concentrated explanations of multiple terms, avoiding interruptions in the reader's flow. Moreover, one can explore the use of free translation, a combination of literal and free translation, substitution, and other methods. Depending on the specific context and cultural differences, the most appropriate method should be chosen to maximize the effective transmission and reception of cultural information while remaining faithful to the original text.

3.5 Reduction

Extended processing can sometimes make it very difficult for Western readers to understand the original text's meaning. The unique and varied structure of Chinese often carries profound implied meanings within a sentence. Additionally, many Chinese literary works are rich in ornate phrases, sometimes leading to semantic overlap. The same problem exists in cultural terms. Therefore, Goldblatt used the reduction method when translating many culturally loaded terms with Tibetan characteristics, simplifying them to facilitate Western readers' understanding while expressing the core meaning of the cultural terms. For example, the term "五彩祥云" was translated as "auspicious clouds", without translating "five-colored" separately, as both "五彩" and "祥云" express good wishes for the future. However, some reductions go beyond reasonable simplification, significantly reducing the original text's cultural connotations. For instance, "寄魂血", "寄魂树", and "寄魂牛", which are manifestations of Tibetan soul worship, reflecting ancient Tibetan culture, were simplified to "blood", "tree", and "cow", reducing their cultural connotations and causing the Tibetan cultural characteristics to disappear, along with readers' channels for deeper understanding and appreciation of the translation.

3.6 Combination

Upon closely examining and analyzing Goldblatt's translation of culture-loaded words in *The Song of King Gesar*, it's found that some entries surpass the traditional scope of single translation techniques. Instead, they have been skillfully integrated two or more translation methods, showcasing the translator's excellent cross-cultural communication skills and artistic creativity. For instance, the word "长寿酒" is translated as "the long-life potion". This translation effectively combines literal translation and substitution method. The literal part "long-life" directly corresponds to the concept of "长寿" in the original text, ensuring the direct transmission of cultural information. Meanwhile, the term "potion" replaces "酒", accurately capturing the medicinal properties of the beverage and emphasizing its effect of granting longevity. This approach reconstructs the cultural connotation and symbolic meaning of the

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original in the target language.

Another noteworthy example is the translation of "如意宝树" as "ruyi tree", which exemplifies the effective combination of transliteration and literal translation. The transliteration "ruyi" retains the original form of the culturally rich Chinese term "如意", evoking associations with auspicious wishes and blessings for readers familiar with the Chinese cultural background. The literal translation "tree" clearly indicates the physical form of this cultural image, preventing potential comprehension obstacles due to cultural differences and ensuring the translation's readability and acceptability in a cross-cultural context. This method not only preserves the cultural uniqueness of the original but also promotes intercultural communication and mutual understanding, serving as an efficient and innovative approach to handling culture-loaded words.

In summary, Goldblatt's diverse and flexible translation methods for handling culture-loaded words in *The Song of King Gesar* profoundly illustrate the essence of translation as a complex cultural activity. The translator adeptly selects and integrates multiple translation methods based on specific contexts and term characteristics to maximize cultural information transmission and accurately reproduce cultural images. When faced with complex and variable culture-loaded words, a single translation method often proves insufficient. In contrast, the combined use of multiple translation strategies can effectively bridge cultural gaps and achieve cultural compensation.

3.7 Amplification

According to Table 2, Goldblatt's translation includes five instances of amplification, making up 2.07% of the total. Although few in number, these instances are highly representative and typical. Goldblatt employs amplification because he recognizes that the deity names in the original text are unfamiliar to Western readers. These names carry significant historical and religious backgrounds in Chinese culture, but Western readers, particularly Christians, generally lack knowledge of Tibetan Buddhism. Therefore, Goldblatt often adds explanatory text to these names during translation to help Western readers better understand and appreciate the cultural connotations of the original text.

For instance, "阿弥陀佛" is translated as "Amitabha, the Buddha of Infinite Qualities". This translation retains the Buddha's name while further explaining its meaning—Amitabha represents ultimate, perfect, and immeasurable qualities. Infinite qualities encompass everything. Thus, not only the Buddha's lifespan is infinite, but also his wisdom, vows, and supernatural powers are all infinite. Such explanations enable Western readers to gain a comprehensive understanding of Amitabha, deepening their knowledge of Buddhist culture.

This amplification method is also applied to other Buddhist titles. For example, "不空成就佛" is translated as "Amoghasiddhi, the Buddha of Unerring Performances", "吉祥庄严宝生佛" as "the Buddha of Blessings and Dignified Treasures", and "观音菩萨" as "Guanyin Bodhisattva of Compassion". These translations not only preserve the original names but also include supplementary descriptions, elucidating the profound meanings behind each Buddhist title.

The amplification method aid readers in understanding the specific content of the text while conveying

the cultural background and religious significance of the original text. This approach allows Western readers to gain more insights into Buddhist culture, thereby enhancing their understanding and appreciation of the text. This translation method showcases Goldblatt's deep understanding of cultural differences between East and West, along with his keen insight and exceptional skills in cross-cultural communication.

In summary, Goldblatt successfully conveys the complex Buddhist titles and their rich cultural connotations to Western readers through amplification in his translation *The Song of King Gesar*. This enables readers to grasp both the literal meaning and the cultural essence of the text.

4. Conclusion

In the process of its formation and development, language can reflect a nation's unique cultural phenomena. Words are the building blocks of language, thus, one can gain insight into the cultural conditions of a nation through these words. Culture-loaded words denote unique elements of a particular culture, reflecting the unique activities accumulated by a specific nation over a long historical process (Liao, 2000). Chinese culture-loaded words are a concentrated embodiment and its most core external manifestation of Chinese culture. Therefore, translators should carefully handle these terms in translation, striving to accurately convey the essence of Chinese culture to the world, achieving the goal of promoting Chinese culture internationally. From the case study of *The Song of King Gesar*, the translation of its culture-loaded words provides some insights into the translation of Chinese ethnic literature.

When handling the cultural terms in *The Song of King Gesar,* Goldblatt uses both foreignization strategies like transliteration and direct translation, and domestication strategies like explanation, replacement, amplification, reduction, and combined methods. The proportion of these strategies is fairly balanced, with neither dominating. The reason lies in the fact that culture-loaded words reflect the common cultural foundation shared by Chinese and English cultures, making transliteration and direct translation possible, while also highlighting their cultural differences, necessitating the use of explanation, replacement, amplification, reduction, and combined methods to convey meanings. Additionally, the combined method, which is less frequently used in the translation, should be seen as an effective means of enhancing the translation's acceptability and effectively conveying the cultural information of the source language.

There are still many shortcomings in this study. Although the explicitness of quantitative research in the humanities are evident, the classification of translation methods before generating statistical data is still highly subjective. Many translation methods are difficult to define and may overlap, but for the sake of final statistics, the primary method is chosen. Overall, combining quantitative and qualitative research has significant practical implications for translation studies.

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