

Original Paper

Translation of Culture-Loaded Words in *Journeys in Nature: The Ewenki Series* from the Perspective of Domestication and Foreignization

Wen Sun^{1*}

¹ College of Foreign Languages, Liaoning University, China

* Wen Sun, College of Foreign Languages, Liaoning University, China

Received: June 30, 2026

Accepted: July 16, 2026

Online Published: July 31, 2026

doi:10.22158/sll.v10n3p58

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22158/sll.v10n3p58>

Abstract

Documentary is an important medium for the overseas dissemination of culture. Therefore, subtitle translation in documentaries has made the translation of culture-loaded words a significant topic in translation studies. This paper takes the documentary Journeys in Nature: The Ewenki Series as its research subject, analyzing the subtitle translation of culture-loaded words within the framework of domestication and foreignization. It explores the translation strategies for different types of culture-loaded words and their intercultural communication effects. The findings reveal that foreignization is predominantly adopted for place names among ecological culture-loaded words and domestication is employed for linguistic and social culture-loaded words. Meanwhile, the translation of material culture-loaded words demonstrates great flexibility. Overall, the documentary exhibits a strategic preference for domestication supplemented by foreignization, offering a reference for the subtitle translation of documentaries on ethnic minorities and the international dissemination of Chinese culture.

Keywords

domestication, foreignization, culture-loaded words, subtitle translation, intercultural communication

1. Introduction

With the enhancement of China's national strength, promoting Chinese culture to the world and improving international communication capabilities have become important tasks in China's cultural development. In this context, the pathways for Chinese culture to *go global* have grown increasingly diverse, no longer confined to traditional cultural product exports but rather presenting Chinese culture

to the international community through a variety of media (Cheng, 2014). As an important medium for intercultural communication, audiovisual works have become a window through which the international community can learn about contemporary China, owing to their advantages in multimodal meaning-making through the coordinated interaction of language, images, sound, and other modes (Lü, 2013). Among which, documentaries are based on accuracy, objectivity, authenticity and cultural richness. From one perspective, they give a fairly comprehensive description of China's natural landscape, ethnic traditions and social life. From another perspective, they facilitate foreign audiences' understanding and appreciation of Chinese culture through factual narration.

Journeys in Nature: The Ewenki Series is a nature documentary made by CGTN. It is made up of seven episodes that focus on the unique survival skills of the Ewenki people, their ethnic customs and beliefs, as well as their devotion and connection with nature. In this documentary, culture-loaded words with unique ethnic features are found many times. These words are full of rich ethnic history, social practices and beliefs. And they are important parts of the documentary in cultural transmission and one of the challenges in subtitling. As culture-loaded words are strongly rooted in their specific cultural environment, they usually have regional and ethnic particularities. The choice of translation strategies will have a direct influence on the effect of conveying cultural information from the source language (Zheng, 2016).

Based on this, the present paper takes the subtitles of *Journeys in Nature: The Ewenki Series* as its research object and adopts domestication and foreignization as the theoretical framework. It provides a classified analysis of the English translation of four types of culture-loaded words appearing in the series. Also, the paper examines the strategic preferences and distinctive features involved in translating various categories of such terms within the subtitle context. According to the study, the potential implications of these translation strategies for promoting Chinese culture internationally can be shown as well. These findings may offer useful reference for subtitle translation practices in cultural documentaries.

2. Culture-loaded Words

Culture is a concept with rich connotations and open boundaries. Due to differences in scholars' research perspectives, theoretical frameworks, and research paradigms, no unified definition of culture has yet been established (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952; Williams, 1983). For example, Malinowski defines that "culture comprises inherited artifacts, goods, technical processes, ideas, habits and values" (Malinowski, 1931). Language, a major vehicle of culture, does more than facilitate communication. Language also embodies a nation's modes of thought, religious beliefs, social customs, and historical memory, serving as a key medium for building a sense of national belonging and sustaining cultural heritage. In light of this, linguistic expressions that carry pronounced cultural and ethnic features tend to be loaded with rich cultural significance, which gives rise to the notion of culture-loaded words

within translation research. Obviously, how such words are transferred across cultures has become a prominent difficulty in translation practice.

Liao defines culture-loaded words as words, phrases and idioms that carry the unique inner meaning of a specific culture. This kind of expression reflects the unique life form of a certain nation accumulated in the long historical process, which is different from other nations (Liao, 2002). Culture-loaded words have strong cultural color and national characteristics. These words include profound historical accumulation, thinking mode and value orientation and are one of the most typical translation objects in intercultural translation practice.

Nida once divided culture into five categories: ecological, material, linguistic, social and religious (Nida, 1945). According to this classification, culture-loaded words can also be classified into five categories, which respectively point to the unique behavior patterns, conceptual forms and institutional arrangements formed by different ethnic groups in long-term life practice. These types together constitute the core and essence of national culture. Ecological culture-loaded words refer to the unique expressions of related elements such as animals and plants, geographical and climatic characteristics, and natural resources, such as “三伏” (*Sanfu*, the hottest period of summer) and “都江堰” (*Dujiangyan*, an ancient water conservancy project). Material culture-loaded words are related to the expression of material products created by human beings and their related production technologies and tools. “旗袍” (*qipao*, a traditional Chinese dress), “算盘” (*sunpan*, a traditional calculating tool), and “豆包” (*doubao*, a traditional Chinese steamed bun filled with bean paste) all belong to such culture-loaded words. Social culture-loaded words are words that reflect specific social structure, social norms and social relations, such as “农民工” (*nongmingong*, migrant workers) and “红包” (*hongbao*, red envelopes). “道” (*Dao*, a Taoism concept), “财神” (*Caishen*, the God of Wealth), and “阴阳” (*yin-yang*, the concept of opposing and complementary forces) are religious culture-loaded words. They involve religious systems, doctrinal norms, belief relations and other phenomena. Linguistic culture-loaded words reflect the unique language phenomena and expression characteristics in specific culture and language system. For instance, take the idiom “破釜沉舟” (*po fu chen zhou*, burning one's boats to indicate determination to fight to the end) (Guan & Xiang, 2024).

3. Domestication and Foreignization

In his article *On the Different Methods of Translating*, Schleiermacher advances a well-known proposition: the translator may either leave the author of the source language in peace and bring the target language reader toward the author, or leave the target language reader undisturbed and bring the author toward the reader (Munday, Pinto, & Blakesley, 2022).

From this statement, Venuti came up with two translation strategies of domestication and foreignization. Domestication, according to Venuti, means a target-culture oriented strategy. Domestication abides by the rules of the target language and adapts the elements of the source culture and fits them into the

target culture. For example, the English idiomatic expression “It rains cats and dogs”, using the domestication strategy, is translated into “大雨倾盆”. Here, the domestication strategy abandons the imagery of “cats and dogs” in the source language and substitutes it with a meteorological expression which is understandable to Chinese people. The domestication strategy makes the target text less difficult for comprehension. On the other hand, foreignization is the strategy which is used for preserving the differences in the source language. This translation strategy uses defamiliarizing devices in order to create difficulties for the target language and introduce the readers to the foreign culture. For example, Yang Xianyi’s translation of “磕头” in *A Dream of Red Mansions* as “kowtow”. The translator uses transliteration to help maintain the culturally distinctive meaning within the traditional Chinese manners and incorporate a new cultural meaning in English language readership (Cao, 2001). Foreignization and domestication are not alternative options. Instead, they are two different choices of translators based on the goals of the translation and the demands of communication. These two strategies can be used differently depending on the context when applied to culture-loaded words. Foreignization is about preserving cultural uniqueness while domestication is concerned with enhancing understanding among the target language users. They all have significant explanatory value in intercultural translation process (Liu, 2009). In recent years, a number of scholars have made use of domestication and foreignization to investigate culture-loaded word translation in audiovisual productions. Zhu, for instance, examined the application of the two strategies in subtitle translation of culture-loaded words through the film *Red Sorghum* (Zhu, 2021). Qiang, based on the subtitle translation of *Kung Fu Panda*, analyzed the characteristics and functions of the two approaches in conveying cultural information (Qiang, 2010). Previous studies have indicated that the framework of domestication and foreignization is applicable to the analysis of culture-loaded terms in audiovisual texts (Yonamine, 2022). Nevertheless, existing research has largely focused on films and literary works, while the translation of culture-loaded words in minority-culture documentaries has received comparatively little attention. As a result, this study takes the documentary *Journeys in Nature: The Ewenki Series* as its research object. It examines the English translation strategies of culture-loaded words within the theoretical framework of domestication and foreignization, with the aim of enriching related research.

4. Subtitle Translation of Culture-loaded Words

This part analyzes the English translation strategies of culture-loaded words in the subtitles of the documentary *Journeys in Nature: The Ewenki Series* based on the theory of domestication and foreignization. Since the documentary primarily records the daily life of the Ewenki ethnic group, there are relatively few typical examples of religious culture-loaded words in the subtitles. Therefore, this part focuses on the analysis of four types of culture-loaded words, namely ecological culture-loaded words, social culture-loaded words, material culture-loaded words, and linguistic culture-loaded words,

in order to examine the translation strategies adopted for different types of culture-loaded words and their effects on cultural transmission.

4.1 Ecological Culture-loaded Words

Ecological culture-loaded words mainly reflect the natural environment, geographical features, and ecological characteristics of a specific region. The ecological culture-loaded words in the documentary *Journeys in Nature: The Ewenki Series* mainly present the natural environment on which the Ewenki people depend and its unique ecological cultural connotations.

Example 1

Source text: 就来到了延绵的大兴安岭。

Target text: ... are the undulating Greater Hinggan Mountains.

The English subtitle translation for “大兴安岭” in the documentary is “Greater Hinggan Mountains”. This translation is done using foreignization. Let’s explore why this choice should be taken into consideration.

“大兴安岭” is an important mountain range in northeast China that represents an important ecological region for the Ewenki people to live in generation after generation. It has its own special cultural and geographical significance in the source text. Among the three words in the target text, “Greater” refers to “大” from the source text, “Hinggan” maintains the original name of the place through the transliteration in order to maximize the preservation of regional culture of the source text. Foreignization plays an important role when it comes to place names in contrast to the free translation or substitution for other place names since it allows readers of the target text to get a sense of the special local culture of Chinese place names. “Mountains” is another word that adds geographical significance. It gives viewers an idea about the kind of place without additional information.

This example through its translation presents the basic geographical information about the Greater Hinggan Mountains. Besides, “Greater Hinggan Mountains” perfectly keeps the cultural connotation that this name bears and helps the international spreading of the Ewenki ecological culture. Thus, this case reveals another role of place name translation in the transmission of the ecological culture-loaded words. Place names are not only the geographical proper names but cultural symbols that bear the information about the regional history, natural environment and relations of local communities with it. Subtitle translation gives the opportunity for the target language audience to have the better perception of the ecological spaces and cultural background reflected in the documentary through the maintenance of the cultural features in the geographical names. The accurate translation of the ecological culture-loaded place names plays an essential role in the preservation and reflection of the natural and ethnic cultures of China in international communications. The place names with their specific cultural meaning should be preserved by good translation rather than simplified. In conclusion, this translation of “大兴安岭” proves the function of subtitle translation as the language transformation and the cultural reflection.

Example 2

Source text: 有很多的蜱虫，草爬子。

Target text: There are lots of ticks.

Ticks, also known in Chinese as “壁虱” and locally referred to as “草爬子”，“牛虱”，or “草蜱虫”，are a type of blood-sucking parasite commonly found in Northeast China (Li & Han, 2011). In the documentary, “草爬子”，as a typical ecological species in the Greater Hinggan Mountains region, frequently appears in the living areas of the Ewenki people. It belongs to ecological culture-loaded words and carries distinctive ecological information of the northeastern forest region.

“蜱虫”，a standardized scientific name, has a direct equivalent in English, namely “tick”. This word means a type of blood-sucking insect. But its alternative name, “草爬子”，lacks a fully equivalent English expression. Meanwhile, due to the time and space constraints of subtitle translation, it is difficult for the translator to explain such a region-specific colloquial term through annotations (de Linde, 1995). These difficulties lead the translator to use domestication and omission. Using only “ticks” for both “蜱虫” and “草爬子” simplifies the translation but weakens the regional flavor of the source language. But in this context, explaining the meaning is more important than regional flavour of the source language. The use of a domestication strategy keeps the basic information about ticks as a typical ecological species in the Greater Hinggan Mountains region. This strategy really makes it easier for audiences in the target language to grasp the features of the ecological surroundings of the Ewenki people. Generally speaking, it strikes a good balance between communicative efficiency and functional needs in subtitle translation.

4.2 Material Culture-loaded Words

Words with material culture connotations mostly indicate information about the material culture of foods, clothes, artifacts, and other tangible items. These words are called material culture-loaded words. These words with material culture connotations may show material practices, means of production, lifestyle, and craftsmanship techniques of a specific ethnic community. In the documentary *Journeys in Nature: The Ewenki Series*, material culture-loaded words pertain to reindeer herding, fur mosaic, and other production and lifestyle practices. The selected words with culture connotations indicate the material production techniques and survival skills of the Ewenki ethnic group developed through the ages.

Example 3

Source text: 它们也无法抗拒零食的诱惑，豆饼和盐。

Target text: They can't resist the temptation of snacks: bean cakes and salt.

“豆饼” refers to a cake-shaped feed product made from soybeans. It is rich in plant protein and commonly used for feeding livestock. As an important material in the Ewenki people's reindeer herding practices, “豆饼” is a typical material culture-loaded word.

In traditional Chinese farming and livestock raising, “豆饼” refers to a kind of feed; however, there is no equivalent for it in English. It is very important for the translator to deal with the problem about how to convey the meaning of this term within the tight time and space constraints of subtitles without any ambiguity. In this case, if we translate it freely as “soybean feed cakes”, the translation will be too long. Based on the multimodal information provided by the documentary, the foreignization strategy is used for translating the term. “豆饼” is directly translated into “bean cakes”. In this way, the combination of “豆” and “饼” in the source language is maintained. There is a visual presentation in the documentary of the situation when reindeer are eating bean cakes. Target language audiences seeing such an image will easily correlate bean cakes with animal food but not human food. On the whole, the use of the foreignization strategy in this case makes it possible to preserve the original form of the term “豆饼” as a carrier of the material culture and to make the target language audience aware of the unique material culture of reindeer herding of the Ewenki people.

Example 4

Source text: 她投身兽皮画技艺。

Target text: She has been making fur mosaics.

The term “兽皮画” is an example of a unique traditional handicraft produced by the Ewenki people. The ethnic art style is created according to the techniques of animal hide patchwork as well as aesthetic needs through the Ewenki ethnic peoples’ practice of production and everyday life (Xia, 2017). The term “兽皮画”, as a traditional art style, is especially connected with the Ewenki people. The term reflects the technique of making patchworks from animal hides and also culture inside the ethnic aesthetic values. There is no direct equivalent in English that could reflect all cultural implications of the term because of differences between artistic forms and traditional crafts in other cultures. In the subtitle translation of this documentary, the translator used an existing artistic concept of the target language, which is called “mosaics”. Instead of constructing a foreign term by means of transliteration or even a literal translation, the translator opts for the domestication strategy and translates “兽皮画” into “fur mosaics”. The meaning conveyed in the English term “mosaics” is the combination of different fragments to form an artwork or decoration. The term “mosaic” is associated with the most important component of “兽皮画”, namely the construction of patterns or images from the animal-hide fragments. At the same time, the word “fur” helps to identify the type of material that is used in this craft and instantly associate the artwork with this kind of material in the target language audience’s mind.

In order to reduce the cognitive challenge brought about by the cultural differences, the translator also chooses an item known to the readers of the target language in terms of “兽皮画”, which indicates the positive effect of the domestication strategy in translating culture-loaded words. Domestication is seen as a positive strategy in translating culture-loaded words. Domestication strategy plays a great role in reducing the heterogeneity of the source language text to its maximum. It helps in making the

adjustment of culture and makes it easier for the source language culture to penetrate into the target language culture. As such, the use of “fur mosaics” makes the cultural distance between the two cultures smaller. However, this domestication strategy of translation entails some inevitable cultural loss. Though the expression “fur mosaics” perfectly shows the material aspect and patchwork approach of “兽皮画”, this translation fails to show the ethnic background and cultural connotation of “兽皮画” in the Ewenki ethnic group. The particular cultural connection of the Ewenki ethnic group with the technique of working on animal hides and cultural significance of this art form are absent in the translation. In this case, the translator employs domestication. This is because, in addition to the constraints of the translation of the cultural artifact itself, the translator takes into account the limitations of subtitle translation, which are, among other factors, limited space and immediate understanding by the audience. The translator’s choice represents a practical balance between keeping culture and making it clear.

Unlike the usual words about material objects, material culture-loaded words not only contain traditional knowledge but also embody cultural memories of particular social situations. In the case given, the importance of a proper translation strategy for the internationalization of material culture-loaded words is reflected. Using a proper translation, cultural items can become understandable for the target language audience but at the same time preserve their fundamental cultural features. The phrase “fur mosaics” can help international audiences understand the artistic shape and method of making the craft of the Ewenki people. In a way, it provides some insight into the cultural wisdom embodied in the traditional practice.

4.3 Social Culture-loaded Words

Words which are culturally-loaded with society imply the social practices and behavior which are developed by a certain ethnic group through social practices. These social culture-loaded words will indicate the unique social life style of the culture. In the documentary, such words are used to reveal the social practices and spiritual beliefs of the Ewenki people, which have been inherited from generation to generation.

Example 5

Source text: 达到天人合一状态的一刻。

Target text: This is a moment of unity.

A concept that is significant in traditional Chinese culture is “天人合一”. It is a philosophical concept that means that humans and nature exist in harmony with each other. It is also very culturally and philosophically loaded with meanings. In the English cultural environment, there is no term that has the same meaning as that of this concept, making it highly culture-loaded. In the documentary, “天人合一” refers to the situation in which people come into existence together with nature and the spiritual world during shamanic rituals. In this case, the translator uses a domestication strategy and translates the term as “a moment of unity”. This is a translation that does not preserve the culture-loaded aspect of the

original term. Instead, an abstract concept “unity” is selected by the translator for the target audience. Indeed, the use of “unity” somewhat reduces the connotations of this term “天人合一” from Chinese philosophy. Given the time and space constraints of subtitles in the documentary film, this is certainly more acceptable in terms of communication effect. On the other hand, the documentary also presents scenes like the shamanic ritual and the behaviors of the Ewenki people in order to introduce this term of “天人合一”. Through the combination of multimodal information, viewers can still gain a fairly comprehensive understanding of the cultural connotations of the term. This translation example thus shows how the translator balances cultural information preservation with intercultural comprehension.

Example 6

Source text: 整个使鹿鄂温克人的生活中。

Target text: In the Ewenki's relationship with the reindeer.

“使鹿鄂温克” is an ethnological term. It refers to the Ewenki group whose primary modes of production are reindeer herding and hunting (Kalina, 2007). It implies distinct cultural and social associations. This term demonstrates the uniqueness of the Ewenki group in terms of their production and way of life. In other words, this term demonstrates the historical dependence between the Ewenki people and reindeer. In the documentary, the source text shows the fact that reindeer are included in all spheres of Ewenki social life instead of introducing the group name. The subtitle renders the term “In the Ewenki's relationship with the reindeer”. The strategy used for translating the subtitle is domestication. The translation does not keep the term “使鹿鄂温克” intact because it is a culturally and ethnically specific term. This term is translated into a relational expression more accessible to the target audience. On the other hand, this particular translation indeed makes the cultural aspects of the source word less obvious in terms of its ethnicity. However, the phrase “In the Ewenki's relationship with the reindeer” reveals the unbreakable bond between the Ewenki and the reindeer. Through this phrase, it is possible to show the importance of the reindeer in the Ewenki community and the target audience can easily understand the concept of living together with nature described in the video.

4.4 Linguistic Culture-loaded Words

Numerous linguistic culture-loaded words, including idioms and dialects, have been used in the documentary *Journeys in Nature: The Ewenki Series*. Due to the differences between Chinese and English languages concerning expressions and culture, the translator has to be flexible and adopt appropriate strategies according to different situations. In this case, the culture can be well delivered and popularized.

Example 7

Source text: 天灾人祸各种原因

Target text: Misfortunes happen all the time.

The idiom “天灾人祸” has cultural features of traditional Chinese culture and refers to disasters resulting from natural catastrophes and human causes. This idiomatic expression is applied to denote

different kinds of dangers and challenges faced by the reindeer in the course of their survival process in the documentary. As there is no idiom in English corresponding to the Chinese idiom “天灾人祸”, the domestication strategy is adopted to translate it as “misfortunes”. “天灾” and “人祸” are not directly translated, but rather, the central idea of those terms is derived and the concept of “misfortunes”, which is widely used in the target language, is employed for the generalization of different kinds of problems reindeer face. This expression “happen all the time” from the documentary film shows the fact that these problems happen constantly. In this particular context, a literal version of “天灾人祸” as “natural disasters and man-made disasters” might maintain the surface meaning, but the expression would appear rather rigid. It would also be too long and complex for subtitles that require conciseness and immediate comprehension. In view of all these problems, the translator has to ignore the formal elements of the source language in order to make sure that the semantic content of the message is properly expressed. The use of a word “misfortunes” according to its usage in the target language helps make the task easy for the viewers.

Example 8

Source text: 都虎视眈眈地盯着我们的驯鹿。

Target text: All drool over our reindeer.

In the documentary, “虎视眈眈” is used to describe predators that constantly stare at reindeer in the forest. This term vividly captures the survival crisis of reindeer and the Ewenki people’s concerns for reindeer. The idiom originally comes from the image of a tiger keeping its focus on prey. It later develops into an expression meaning to observe something with strong desire and a threatening attitude. In the source language, the tiger image in “虎视眈眈” gives the phrase a striking visual quality and strong emotional impact. In translating “虎视眈眈”, a literal translation such as “watch like a tiger” could keep the original animal image intact. But to English-speaking people, it will be difficult for them to comprehend the idea that there is a sense of greed and longing underneath the idiom. Since the English language lacks an exact equivalent of this idiom, a literal translation would lead to semantic problems. Thus, the translator resorts to domestication strategy and opts to use “drool over”. This phrase means intense interest in something and fits very well with the connotation of greediness in “虎视眈眈”. The imagery conveyed by this idiom in the Chinese language gets lost. But the main meaning of this word is retained. “Drool over” is a good expression used for the audience to understand the concern of the Ewenki people towards the outsiders who may covet their reindeer resources. The use of the right vocabulary for the target language can help improve the naturalness of the subtitles. It also highlights the survival struggles faced by the reindeer and the strong emotional attachment of the Ewenki people towards reindeer.

Example 9

Source text: 已经根深蒂固了。

Target text: They’re ingrained.

A usual four-character idiom in Chinese, “根深蒂固”, is abundant in profound metaphorical sense. Here, “根” means the root of plants. And “深”, along with “固”, means roots that are firmly rooted in the soil. There occurs metaphorical extension where the idiom shifts from the concrete field of plant rooting to the abstract field of ideas, beliefs, customs, and phenomena of society. Thus, the physical image of deeply rooted plants serves as the conceptual image for abstract concepts. The idiom conveys not only the sense of a certain period of time but also the sense of something that has been firmly established through its continuous development and accumulation.

The problem in translating “根深蒂固” occurs in the documentary, as the term refers to firmly established thoughts or culture that lasts for an extensive period of time. To comprehend the idiomatic term, one needs to take an imaginative step. The visualization depicts the roots firmly fixed into the ground. From this visual concept, one will comprehend the abstract meaning of stability and firmness. This figurative translation poses another challenge to the translator since the meaning of the term cannot be conveyed by simply decoding the meaning of each character. Although a literal translation such as “deep-rooted” keeps the metaphor, the translator uses “ingrained” and uses domestication as his strategy. “Ingrained” has its own metaphorical connotation, and it is easy for the target audience to comprehend the word. When “ingrained” first appeared, it was used to refer to a method of dyeing using grains, which were a type of red coloring made from insects known as cochineal. It was used to talk about colors that went deeply into fabrics or any other material. From this literal usage, there has been a semantic change. Now “ingrained” means entrenchment of thoughts and culture, meaning that the thoughts and culture are entrenched deeply in such a way that it is very hard to eradicate them (Harper, n.d.). As for the metaphorical aspects of “根深蒂固” and “ingrained”, they have their differences and similarities. While “根深蒂固” shows its meaning using the metaphor of plant roots, the English word uses the metaphor of substance penetrating deep into another material. Therefore, while the two phrases come from different source domains, both are examples of representing abstract ideas through concrete things. The two expressions also share the same semantic core: firmly established and hard to be changed. Perhaps most significantly, the translation of the phrase “根深蒂固” into “ingrained” represents not merely the translation of one word to another but also the metaphorical shift between the two language and culture systems. The translator’s choice of the word “ingrained” as the equivalent expression in the source language is an example of the process of domestication. This strategy can be described as a transition from the botanical metaphor used in the source expression to another metaphor that also represents the similar semantic core.

In sum, there are two major results that come from such a strategy. On the one hand, for the target language audience, it is easier to understand the figure of speech as they are dealing with a metaphor that resembles English language patterns. They are not faced with an alien cultural concept. On the other hand, the basic meaning of the idiomatic phrase is maintained. It is worth mentioning that despite the change in the image, the meanings remain the same. Still, there is a loss involved here. The image

of roots implies the notion of growth and generational continuity. With the use of the translation, the specifically Chinese connotations are lost in translation. This case also points to a broader methodological challenge. Most Chinese idiomatic expressions often contain metaphorical structures. These structures combine concrete perceptual content with culturally specific abstract meanings. Through an appropriate domestication strategy, translators may reshape such expressions with hidden meanings. They can make target texts more accessible to intercultural audiences. In doing so, they help international readers understand Chinese linguistic expressions. They are also in favour of spreading Chinese culture in global scholarly and cultural exchange.

5. Conclusion

The foregoing analysis concludes that the translation of culture-loaded words in documentary subtitles does not adopt a single translation strategy. According to the cultural attributes, contextual information, features of both source and target language, and communicative needs of different types of culture-loaded words, domestication and foreignization strategies are comprehensively applied, instead. When analyzing subtitle translation of culture-loaded words, the paper finds that place names in ecological culture-loaded words mostly use the foreignization strategy to preserve the cultural characteristics and regional identification of the source language. By contrast, linguistic culture-loaded words and social culture-loaded words tend to adopt the domestication strategy. The use of domestication helps reduce the difficulty of target language audiences' comprehension of such culture-loaded words. The translation of material culture-loaded words shows strong flexibility. Translators use both to balance cultural preservation and information transmission by combining specific contexts and multimodal information. Overall, the subtitle translation of this documentary presents the characteristics of prioritizing the domestication strategy with the foreignization strategy as a supplement. While enhancing the acceptability of the translation, it also effectively keeps the unique cultural characteristics of the Ewenki people. It should be noted that the scope of the case study in this paper is limited. The applicability of the relevant findings still requires further verification through more corpora.

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