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Article

Ecological Adaptation and Selection in Translating Huzhou Intangible Cultural Heritage Craft Terms: A Case Study

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Abstract: Promoting China's indigenous intangible cultural heritage (ICH) to the global audience has seen a spurt of progress recently, but empirical work on how translators actually handle traditional craft terms remains scarce. This study takes the local bilingual anthology Huzhou Intangible Cultural Heritage as a case, which examines the translation techniques used for ICH craft terms and the way they relate to the three-dimensional transformations in Eco-translatology. A corpus of 96 ICH craft term pairs was compiled through Python-driven extraction and manual verification. Two re-searchers coded each term independently using Molina and Albir's taxonomy of translation tech-nique. The results show a clear asymmetry: Linguistic-dimension techniques dominate at 77.1%; cultural-dimension techniques account for 18.7%; communicative techniques appear only margin-ally, amounting to 3.1%. This pattern reflects the referential nature of craft terms. Many denote concrete objects, materials, or procedures that find close equivalents in English, making direct transfer the most economical option. However, when terms carry culturally specific meanings or risk obscurity, translators do resort to cultural elaboration or contextual restructuring. The findings caution against treating ICH translation as a uniform enterprise, and further suggest that ICH term type and semantic properties shape technique distribution, more than abstract principles of cultural preservation alone.

Keywords: Eco-translatology; three-dimensional transformation; intangible cultural heritage term; traditional craftsmanship; translation technique

1. Introduction

Intangible cultural heritage (ICH) is the traditional practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, along with skills that communities, groups, and individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage [1]. As China ramps up its cultural outreach to the world, the translation of ICH-related materials has emerged as a crucial undertaking for international publicity and academic exchange. According to [2], ICH manifests itself across five broad domains: (1) oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the ICH; (2) performing arts; (3) social practices, rituals, and festive events; (4) knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe; (5) traditional craftsmanship.

Terms in particular crystallize the ICH knowledge, as the primary medium for cross-lingual knowledge dissemination and discourse construction. Unlike general vocabulary, ICH terms carry culturally specific knowledge. Research such as [3] has shown that ICH texts have "the function of cultural load, including specific historical knowledge, typical regional characteristics, and profound cultural connotations," making them "resistant to translation or even untranslatable." Among the aforementioned five ICH domains, traditional craft terms denote concrete artifacts, materials, tools, and operational procedures, which might suggest less effort. However, even seemingly straightforward

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ICH craft terms may embed culturally specific meanings, historical allusions, or local knowledge. Thus the translation could be complicated.

Huzhou, rich in culture, is home to the ecological mantra—"lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets." Interestingly, it is in line with the holistic perspective of Eco-translatology. The bilingual anthology *Huzhou Intangible Cultural Heritage* (《苕霅遗韵：湖州非遗精选中英双语读本》) [4] offers us a valuable case to examine how two translators navigate the linguistic, cultural, and communicative dimensions of ICH craft term translation. Against such backdrop, we explore the following questions:

1. What translation techniques are predominantly employed in the translation of ICH traditional craft terms in *Huzhou Intangible Cultural Heritage*? And how are these techniques distributed?
2. How do these translation techniques realize the three-dimensional transformation, as articulated in Eco-translatology?

In so doing, this case study seeks to contribute empirical evidence on how glossary of ICH craft terms are translated by means of techniques and their distribution across those three dimensions, to which we turn below.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Eco-Translatology: Core Concepts and Application

First proposed by Hu Gengshen, Eco-translatology is an emerging paradigm in translation studies that draws upon ecological perspectives to rethink the nature, process, and evaluation of translation [5].

Its theoretical premise, "Translation as Adaptation and Selection", from Darwinian notions of evolution inspired three of his key works, *An Approach to Translation as Adaptation and Selection*, *Eco-Translatology: Construction and Interpretation*, and the English monograph *Eco-Translatology: Towards an Eco-paradigm of Translation Studies* [6–8]. He drank deeply of the Oriental ecological thinking [8], too, including the "the unity and harmony between human and heaven." One of the concepts central to the framework is the translational eco-environment. There are set of factors that influence and constrain the translator's choices, including source and target languages, cultural backgrounds, what the author wants to say, what readers expect, and the wider social and historical setting [5,9]. In this eco-environment, the translator engages in a cyclical process of adaptive selection and selective adaptation [8].

Although translation is "the activity of selection in which the translation adapts the translational eco-environment to transplant the text with the translator as the dominator, with the text as the basis, and with the transformation of cross-cultural information as the doctrine [8]," and the translational eco-environment is composed of multiple dimensions and various elements, this does not mean that other dimensions and other elements cannot play a role in the translation process when a certain dimension or element is stressed for the convenience of description. In fact, such idea gives rise to another model, "three-dimensional transformations" [6]. In the process of concrete translation, the linguistic, cultural, and communicative elements usually interlace, interrelate, and interact, and it is sometimes rather difficult to distinguish them clearly.

Eco-translatology has proven particularly productive in the translation of ICH terms. This is perhaps not so surprising a finding. Studies on Qiang minority Shibi-Drama have shown that Eco-translatology provides a useful framework for analyzing how translators adapt to cultural, social, and linguistic factors in the translation environment [10]. In a similar vein, the translation of Hmong oral epics has been examined through this lens, with researchers having identified how different types of folklore terms (e.g., material, social, and spiritual) need different translation strategies in the framework of Eco-translatology [11]. ICH terms are often hard to translate because they carry deep cultural meanings. They also need to inform readers and communicate cultural values at the same

time [12]. In this sense, Eco-translatology provides a useful framework for this case study of ICH craft terms in the bilingual Huzhou anthology.

2.2. Research on C-E Translation of ICH Terms

Research on the Chinese-English translation of ICH terms has gained momentum. Existing studies can be broadly categorized into three streams: (1) the conceptual clarification of the ICH term itself, (2) the application of translation theories to ICH term translation, and (3) the development of term-specific translation strategies.

ICH terms carry both material and spiritual knowledge, as the conceptual nature of them has been examined in depth. Some studies examine specific ICH types, including research on Hmong oral epics finds that material, social, and spiritual folklore terms require different strategies, like target-oriented for material terms, source-oriented for social and spiritual ones [11]. Cognitive-linguistic work explores metonymic mechanisms in ICH term translation, identifying patterns of category substitution and phonetic transfer [3].

From a cognitive-linguistic perspective, researchers have examined the metonymic mechanisms underlying ICH term translation [3]. According to cognitive psychological theory, ICH terms in the source language contain a series of possible meanings, and translators select the meaning they subjectively understand and present it in language expression. Others resort to the knowledge system as motivation in the process [13]. Such views help explain why different translators produce different versions of the same ICH term.

In addition to that, challenges in practical translation have also received tremendous attention. Common problems can be summarized as inconsistent terms, over-reliance on transliteration without explanation, and insufficient attention to conceptual systematicity. In a bid to settle these, there are researchers advocating a three-step process: locate the term in its conceptual system, define it clearly, and then name it in the target language [12]. For culture-specific ICH terms, several strategies have been suggested, including transliteration with notes, description, and adaptation [9]. Other literature stresses that knowledge should come first [13]. The main target, they contend, is to pass on ICH knowledge accurately, such as paper-cut and shadow play [13,14].

It would go amiss if terminology standardization was not in the academic limelight, as it has been emphasized in [15]. Translators Association of China (TAC) recently issued [16], in an effort to regulate ICH and cultural heritage terminology translation. The document provides detailed principles for translating historical periods, artifact names, architectural terms, and ICH items. For instance, it recommends using Pinyin for proper nouns like “太极拳” (Taijiquan) and “粤剧” (Yueju opera) (See [16], p. 7), and some translation paradigms of jade ware, bronze ware, and porcelain ware are laid out for reference (See [16], p. 10–11), close to what this study delves into.

But not to put too fine a point on it, existing research has several limitations as well. Summing up, there is little fine-grained technique analysis; few studies link techniques to the three dimensions quantitatively, and most treat ICH terms as a single group. Empirical work is indeed sizable, especially Chinese ones, but those on traditional craft terms remain relatively scarce and not standardized. To that end, the present case study would fill these gaps through a two-fold analysis of ICH craft terms in the following sections.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Data Source and Selection Strategy

The material for this study is a bilingual anthology on Huzhou ICH items, entitled *Huzhou Intangible Cultural Heritage*, which features 26 national- and provincial-level indigenous ICH items from the Huzhou region. The book is comprised of 7 chapters spanning all of the four ICH categories. Among these, the category of traditional

craftsmanship, on which this study puts primary focus, includes the following Huzhou ICH items: Jili Silk Handicraft, Shuanglin Silk Damask Weaving and Making Technique, Green Tea Making Techniques (Changxing Zisun Tea Making Technique and Anji White Tea Making Craftsmanship), Huzhou Writing Brush Craftsmanship, Huzhou Feather Fan Craftsmanship, Purple Clay Firing Craftsmanship. The total Chinese source text in this book amounts to approximately 95,000 characters, with a comparable English translation length of roughly 75,000 words. The selection of this bilingual anthology as the research material is justified on two grounds: firstly, it stands as the first—and the one and only to date—cultural publication dedicated to Huzhou ICH; secondly, it has received funding from the Zhejiang Federation of Humanities and Social Sciences Circles, which ensures the representativeness and authenticity of the translations.

The eligibility criteria were defined prior to the selection process to ensure methodological transparency, minimize selection bias, and maintain alignment between the research questions and the search strategy. Below, Figure 1 visualizes the complete identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion process.

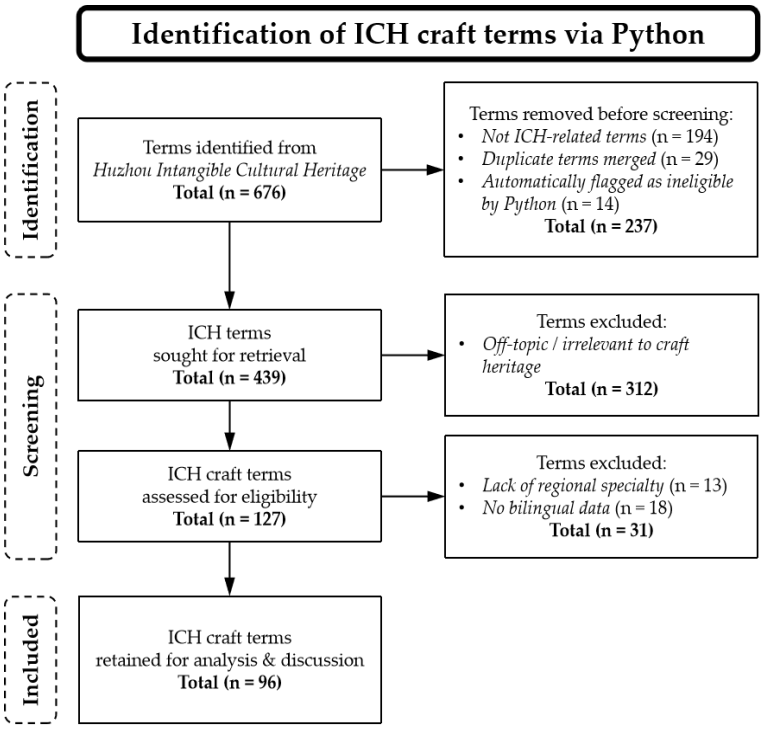


Figure 1. Flowchart of ICH craft term identification and selection process.

To ensure the rigor and replicability of the whole data retrieval process, a Python-driven computational screening method was adopted, following a strict four-step workflow framework.

Initially, a Python script was designed to traverse the full text of the bilingual anthology, extracting all potential terms related to ICH through keyword-based retrieval and regular expression pattern matching. Consequently, the identification process initially retrieved 676 candidates from the book. Then the script executed a rule-based filtering algorithm to remove irrelevant data based on the exclusion criteria. During the identification phase, 194 terms were removed because they were identified as general vocabulary, rather than ICH terms. In addition, 29 duplicate terms were removed to avoid redundant calculations, and 14 automatically marked as structurally incomplete or semantically ambiguous. After this automated pre-screening, a total of 439 ICH terms were retained and sought for retrieval. A manual review was then conducted by two

researchers to screen the retrieved terms against the traditional craftsmanship domain. During this screening phase, 312 terms were excluded as off-topic because they belong to other ICH domains, such as performing arts. Among the remaining 127 terms, 13 could not be retained on account of lacking regional specialty, and 18 for lacking the corresponding target text. Included were 96 ICH craft terms, retained for subsequent translation analysis.

3.2. Corpus Compilation and Coding

Following this process, we compiled a refined bilingual corpus of 96 ICH craft items and bilingual terms for subsequent translation analysis. Notably, each entry included the source context and target equivalent to support coding.

To systematically examine the translation patterns, this study used 18-category translation technique classification (See [17]) as the primary tool, as summarized in Table 1. We chose it because it provided a detailed and nuanced set of categories, covering a wide range of micro-level translation. In our case, it was applied as a reliable and repeatable tool for cross-linguistic and cross-textual comparisons in ICH term translation.

Table 1. Molina and Albir's translation technique classification. The language codes used in the examples are as follows: A=Arabic; E=English; F=French; I=Italian; SP=Spanish.

Translation Technique	Example
Adaptation	Baseball [E] ⇒ Fútbol [SP]
Amplification	رمضان [A] ⇒ Ramadan, the Muslim month of fasting [E]
Borrowing	Pure: Lobby [E] ⇒ Lobby [SP] Naturalized: Meeting [E] ⇒ Mitin [SP]
Calque	École normale [F] ⇒ Normal School [E]
Compensation	I was seeking thee, Flathead [E] ⇒ En vérité, c'est bien toi que je cherche, O Tête-Plate [F]
Description	Panettone [I] ⇒ The traditional Italian cake eaten on New Year's Eve [E]
Discursive creation	Rumble fish [E] ⇒ La ley de la calle [SP]
Established equivalent	They are as like as two peas [E] ⇒ Se parecen como dos gotas de agua [SP]
Generalization	Guichet, fenêtre, devanture [F] ⇒ Window [E]
Linguistic amplification	No way [E] ⇒ De ninguna de las maneras [SP]
Linguistic compression	Yes, so what? [E] ⇒ ¿Y? [SP]
Literal translation	She is reading [E] ⇒ Ella está leyendo [SP]
Modulation	ستصير أبا [A] ⇒ You are going to have a child [E]
Particularization	Window [E] ⇒ Guichet, fenêtre, devanture [F]
Reduction	Ramadan, the Muslim month of fasting [E] ⇒ رمضان [A]
Substitution (linguistic, paralinguistic)	Put your hand on your heart * [A] ⇒ Thank you [E]
Transposition	He will soon be back [E] ⇒ No tardará en venir [SP]
Variation	Introduction or change of dialectal indicators, changes of tone, etc.

* It is interpreted as a gesture, one of the paralinguistic features within the broader framework of nonverbal communication.

The 18 categories include a broad spectrum of translation techniques, namely amplification, borrowing, calque, compensation, description, discursive creation, established equivalent, generalization, linguistic amplification, linguistic compression, literal translation, modulation, particularization, reduction, substitution, transposition, and variation [17]. Each technique is defined by its specific scope, but it is also worth

noting that these techniques may be combined or overlaid in the translation of a single ICH craft term.

As per the three-dimensional transformation of Eco-translatology, the taxonomy of translation techniques can be further classified (see Table 2). The linguistic dimension includes techniques that primarily focus on lexical, syntactic, and textual adjustments. The cultural dimension includes techniques employed to bridge cultural gaps or preserve local color. The communicative dimension encompasses techniques so as to achieve pragmatic functions in the target language. Since our analysis is confined to the translated text where paralinguistic cues are not represented, substitution falls exclusively into the linguistic dimension.

Table 2. Mapping of translation techniques onto the three-dimensional transformation model.

Three-Dimensional Transformation	Translation Technique
Linguistic dimension	Borrowing
	Calque
	Generalization
	Linguistic amplification
	Linguistic compression
	Literal translation
	Modulation
	Particularization
	Substitution
	Transposition
Cultural dimension	Adaptation
	Amplification
	Description
	Established equivalent
	Reduction
Communicative dimension	Compensation
	Discursive creation
	Variation

The coding process was then conducted in two rounds. In the first round, each reviewer independently coded all 96 ICH craft terms based on the predefined technique definitions and illustrative examples in [17]. In the second round, we compared coding results, discussed all discrepancies, and reached consensus through full-text double check of the problematic cases. This whole procedure was implemented to curb subjectivity and enhance reliability of the categorization outcomes. Inter-rater agreement statistics such as Cohen's Kappa were not calculated, as the qualitative and interpretive nature of the task made consensus resolution more appropriate. Finally, all the results were included into a structured data set, paving way for the qualitative and quantitative analyses.

3.3. Analytical Framework and Procedures

Moving forward, this study examined how these techniques function in the three-dimensional transformation model of Eco-translatology, and then quantified their dimensional distribution. Because of the understanding of translation as previously mentioned, the translation process of ICH craft terms is sketched in Figure 2 in light of the so-called "adaptation and selection" theory. The translational eco-environment includes the source and target ICH term texts, the cultural contexts, and the translator's centeredness (i.e., adaptation and selection). Selective adaptation and adaptive selection in the translation process feature "adaptation"—translators adapt to the translational eco-environment; and "selection"—translators, who stand for the translational eco-

environment, select the target ICH craft term texts [8]. Efforts are exerted, in one way or another, to make sure that the appropriate texts fit right into the translation eco-environment.

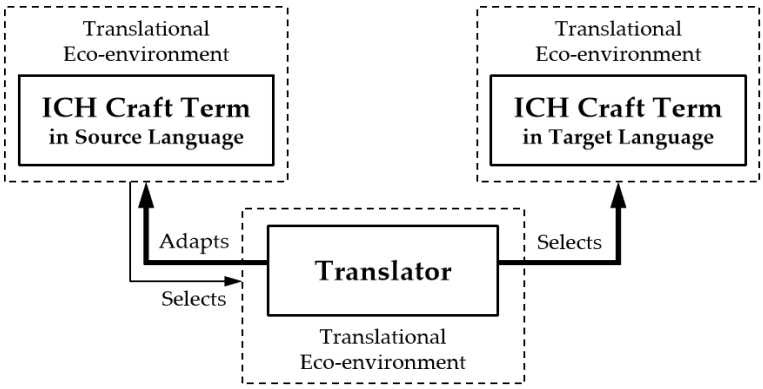


Figure 2. Model of translators' adaptations and selections in translation process of ICH craft terms; adapted from [8].

Our first step was to conduct a micro-analysis of selected representative term pairs from each dimension for textual analysis. The selection criteria were twofold. First, the term pair must exemplify the frequently occurring technique in that dimension. Second, the translation must clearly show translators' adaptive selection in response to specific constraints in the translational eco-environment. These constraints might include the referential density of the source term, the target readers' presumed ICH craft knowledge, or the conventions of English-language heritage publications. For each typical case, the specific translation eco-environment was examined to demonstrate how the translators "adapt and select" or, in other words, adopt certain techniques in order to realize the three-dimensional transformations.

The second step entailed a quantitative statistical analysis. Based on the coding results from the corpus and the dimensional classification standard, we calculated the frequency and percentage of each translation technique in the three dimensions. Next up, we collated and ranked these techniques by frequency of occurrence. The statistical distribution of the techniques was then visualized. These procedures yielded a holistic overview of which techniques are predominantly used in translating ICH craft terms, and which remain marginal or absent.

4. Results

4.1. Overview of Translation Techniques

To address the first research question, this section provides a qualitative overview of the translation techniques identified in the compiled bilingual glossary. ICH-related terms under the category of traditional craftsmanship were extracted from the source text and matched with their corresponding English translations. Each term was coded using the translation technique taxonomy proposed by [17], offering a fine-grained and doable framework for analyzing micro-level translator decisions.

The coding results reveal that the translation of traditional craft terms in this corpus employs a diverse and patterned repertoire of techniques. The techniques identified can be broadly grouped into three categories corresponding to the linguistic, cultural, and communicative dimensions of Eco-translatology. The findings indicate that all translation techniques, except for two, were utilized.

In the linguistic dimension, every single technique is used. Literal translation and borrowing are particularly prevalent for craft names, material types, and tool designations. Take "蚕" rendered as silkworm, "丝" as silk, and "湖笔" as Huzhou Writing Brush

(borrowing and literal translation). Linguistic compression is applied when concise Chinese expressions are condensed into shorter English equivalents, and redundant modification is streamlined. This case is further analyzed in the next subsection. Transposition occurs in cases like "芽叶初展" (the leaf being sprouting), where a nominal structure is shifted to a verbal one. Modulation appears in instances such as "茶氨酸" (theanine content), where the translation adopts a different semantic perspective to convey the same meaning.

In the cultural dimension, techniques such as amplification (cultural), adaptation, description, and established equivalent are employed. Amplification is used when cultural specificity requires explicit explanation, where the term is followed by a clarification in definition. Description is applied to visually oriented terms, such as "龙绫" (dragon pattern silk damask), where the visual feature is foregrounded over the literal "dragon silk." Adaptation appears in culturally embedded expressions like "蒙公祠" (Meng Tian Temple), where the historical figure is made explicit, and "丝绸之府" ("the Home of Silk"), where the metaphor is retained but culturally recalibrated. Established equivalents are used for canonical references, as seen in examples such as "文房四宝" (Four Treasures in the Study) and《茶经》(*The Classic of Tea)*.

In the communicative dimension, techniques including discursive creation and compensation are identified, though they occur less frequently. Discursive creation is applied in cases where the source term carries strong pragmatic or contextual connotations that resist direct transfer, such as "水口紫笋茶制作技艺" compressed into "making technique" (We break down this case in the next subsection); the original syntactic structure is restructured to prioritize intelligibility over verbatim equivalence. Compensation is used in culturally resonant sayings like "一两紫砂一两金" into "one *liang* of purple clay equals to one *liang* of gold," where the rhythmic and proverbial quality is retained through a parallel structure in English.

To sum up, the translators' choices of translation techniques differ under many circumstances. The reasons can be the semantic density (in the linguistic dimension), the cultural richness (in the cultural dimension), and the communicative function (in the communicative dimension) of each ICH craft term. Linguistically oriented techniques dominate for referential and denotative terms; culturally and communicatively oriented techniques are selectively added, when the term carries craft-related knowledge, historical allusions, or pragmatic nuances that are opaque to an international audience.

4.2. Adaptation and Selection in Three-Dimensional Transformations

4.2.1. Translation Techniques in Linguistic Dimension

Adaptive selection in the linguistic dimension is a multifaceted process, including transformation at levels of words, sentences, and texts [9], and to be more specific, in aspects such as pronunciation, syntax, vocabulary, form, rhetoric, and style [6]. Meanwhile, it requires translators to make choices to the linguistic features of both the source and target languages, in order that the target text is both linguistically acceptable and optimally adapted to the target linguistic eco-environment. For instance, linguistic compression can be a desirable choice in translating ICH craft terms into English.

Example 1. Translation technique—linguistic compression—is applied.

ST: *湖笔种类繁多，主要有羊毫笔（山羊毛）、兔毫笔（山兔毛）、狼毫笔（黄鼠狼尾毛）、兼毫笔（混合用毛）四个大类* [4]。

TT: *The Huzhou Writing Brush has a wide variety. It has four main categories:* ***the goat hair writing brush***, ***the cony hair writing brush***, ***the yellow weasel hair writing brush*** *and* ***the mixed animal hair writing brush*** [4].

Take the translation of Huzhou Writing Brush's four main categories. In Example 1, each category comes with a parenthetical note on the specific animal hair used, but information in the source text is too much and needs to be filtered. To that end, translators adopt linguistic compression to meet the linguistic demands of the translational eco-environment, condensing the linguistic elements in the target text without omitting essential information [17].

Those terms are translated as "the goat hair writing brush," "the cony hair writing brush," "the yellow weasel hair writing brush," and "the mixed animal hair writing brush." The translators compress the parenthetical materials (i.e., "山羊毛", "山兔毛", "黄鼠狼尾毛", and "混合用毛") by folding them directly into the noun phrases. No semantic information is lost, and the specific materials remain neatly conveyed. The streamlining also brings a gain in readability. In English, excessive parenthetical interruptions tend to disrupt sentence flow and create a clumsy reading experience. By eliminating them, the translators bridge two linguistic systems and, more broadly, two different expository styles. As a result, the target readers will have a clearer sense of the technical details about terms of Huzhou writing brush materials.

This case in point illustrates how linguistic compression functions as an adaptive selection in the linguistic dimension. The technique proves effective, and such method also reminds us that translating ICH craft terms often merits attention to target-language syntax, especially when the source text relies on structural devices that do not translate neatly into English.

4.2.2. Translation Techniques in Cultural Dimension

Language is inextricably intertwined with culture. In addition to the linguistic transformation, the translator also needs to adapt the cultural system (i.e., the cultural ecology) and pay attention to the transmission of bilingual cultural connotations in the source text [8]. Given that Chinese and English differ greatly in both writing and pronunciation, pure borrowing is more applicable to Western languages due to their similarities [9]. Thus, phonetic imitation or transliteration is more commonly used in the C-E translation of culturally-loaded ICH craft terms.

Nonetheless, relying solely on this could fall short of conveying the rich cultural meanings to the target audience. In translation of craft terms, a strategy combining transliteration with explanation can be adopted [18]. In the case below, the translators appear to have extended this combined approach.

Example 2. Translation techniques—generalization, borrowing and amplification—are applied.

ST: *绫绢是绫与绢的合称* [4]。

TT: *The* ***silk damask****, which is* ***called "Lingjuan" in Chinese****, is collectively referred to* ***"Ling"*** *and* ***"Juan"****.* ***"Ling"*** *is* ***a kind of silk which has patterns on it*** *and* ***"Juan"*** *is* ***a kind of silk which is in plain color*** [4].

The source text introduces the ICH craft term "绫绢" (*líng juàn*) in Example 2, which refers to two distinct types of traditional Chinese silk fabrics. Translators employ a combination of generalization, borrowing, and amplification to handle this cultural item, and such an approach can be seen as an attempt to meet the cultural demands of the translational eco-environment.

Initially, translating the ICH term into the "silk damask" can be identified as generalization, since damask is a broader, more generic term for damask silk and spun silk [19]. The use of pure borrowing (i.e., transliteration or *lingjuan* in Pinyin) and the subsequent breakdown into two root morphemes, *ling* and *juan*, retain the phonetic features of the Chinese original source language. And the separation of linguistic form is not the end of the story; translators also apply amplification, as a lack of exact English equivalent of this term prompts them to further elaborate on the slight material distinctions—the silk with complex decorative patterns is *ling* while the plain-coloured one is *juan*. The translators actively transform between the two linguistic systems and, more than that, between the source cultural ecosystem and the target cultural ecosystem. In this manner, the cultural term about textile would be readily comprehensible to the target readers in their own "eco-environment."

Taken together from an eco-translatological perspective, generalization, borrowing, and cultural amplification, when used in tandem, reveal the translators' adaptive selection in response to the cultural dimension of the translational eco-environment. And the multi-strategy approach in the example achieves desirable results, illustrating that much about culture has to be taken into consideration in translating ICH craft terms, especially when the target audience lack relevant knowledge of Chinese culture.

4.2.3. Translation Techniques in Communicative Dimension

Besides conveying linguistic and cultural information, translation should also deliver the original communicative purpose to readers in the target language context. In essence, the adaptive selection transformation of the communicative purpose in the translation process is related to the pursuit of the situation, where the communicative ecology of the source-text language and the target-text language will be best maintained [8].

ICH craft terms are not only pearls of wisdom from ancient Chinese artisans, but also an invaluable inheritance handed down through generations. Thus it is less about what is said than about what is implied for the community. But it can be tricky to make sure that the intentions hidden in the ICH craft terms can be effectively communicated to the target audiences. Another example will be given to analyze if the translators have fulfilled the esoteric term's communicative purposes and how their translation achieve the transformation in the communicative dimension.

Example 3. *Translation technique—discursive creation—is applied.*

ST: *目前，水口乡紫笋茶种植面积有一万余亩，**水口紫笋茶制作技艺**经过几十代人的传承和发展，已成为我国茶制作技艺中一朵奇葩* [4]。

TT: *Nowadays, the planting area of **Zisun Tea in Shuikou Village** has developed to 10,000 mu. Its **making technique** due to its inheritance and development through dozens of generations* [4].

The source text in Example 3 features the ICH craft term "水口紫笋茶制作技艺" (Shuikou Zisun Tea making technique). In the target text, this term is translated simply as "the technique." Translators employ discursive creation to handle this expression, and it is more of a way to be communicative the translational eco-environment.

What we see here is a prime example of discursive creation, which [17] defines as the introduction of a temporary equivalence that is totally unpredictable out of context. The full source term carries considerable cultural and geographical specificity: the term identifies the craft itself, its place of origin (Shuikou), and its association with a particular tea variety (Zisun Tea). But the translators break the mold here, as the translation reduces these to the bare noun "technique." At first glance, this might appear to be a significant loss of information. Nevertheless, the surrounding context in the target text already

establishes the subject matter as Zisun Tea from Shuikou Village, because the preceding sentence specifies the planting area and the following clause discussing inheritance across generations. Given this textual eco-environment, the translation remains neat in its use of words and clear without repeating the full term. It suggests that contextual support sometimes allows for a more economical solution. A broader point to make is that terms, like in this case, at times do not entail word-for-word translation, for the sake of communicative clarity.

Discursive creation in the case works as an adaptive selection in the communicative dimension. The translators opt for a leaner expression to avoid redundancy, relying on the co-text to supply the missing specifics. In this sense, the communicative intention of the original is achieved, and the cognitive load on target readers is reduced as well.

4.3. Statistical Distribution of Translation Techniques

A total of 96 non-repetitive bilingual ICH craft terms were analyzed for translation techniques. Figure 3 illustrates the distribution of all attested techniques across the three dimensions of Eco-translatology.

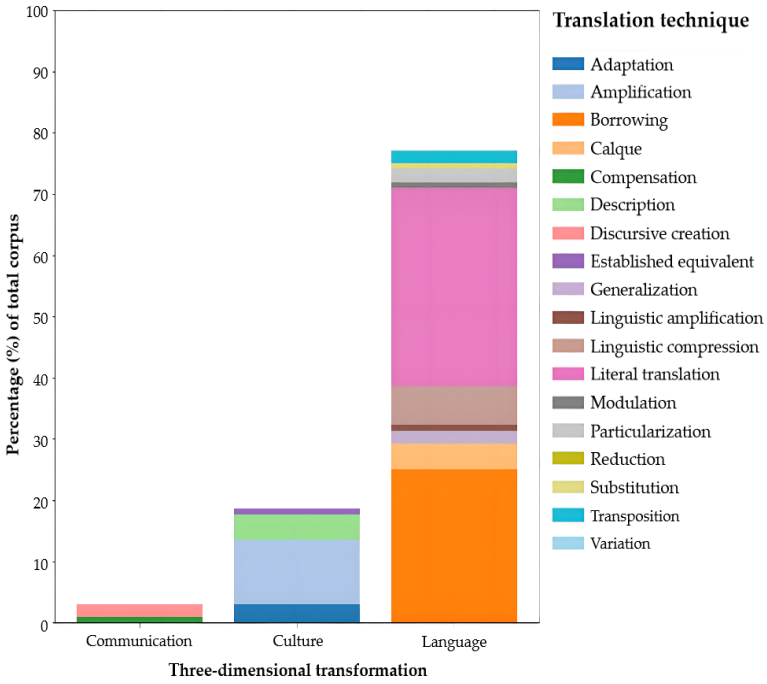


Figure 3. Distribution of translation techniques for ICH craft terms.

Of all the 18 translation techniques, 16 were observed in our survey, with only reduction and variation absent from the corpus, as discussed previously. In other words, the translators have drawn upon almost the full repertoire of available techniques to translation ICH craft terms. However, the distribution is far from symmetrical.

Figure 3 shows that dominant translation techniques skew heavily towards the linguistic dimension, which accounts for 77.1% of all recorded instances. In this category, literal translation alone makes up 32.3% of the total, and borrowing another 25.0%. Together, these two techniques represent over half of all strategies across the entire corpus. Other linguistic techniques (e.g., calque, at 4.2%; linguistic compression, at 6.3%; transposition, at 2.1%) occur at substantially lower rates. In other words, when the translators deal with an ICH craft term that refers to a specific object, material, or procedure, they tend to transfer it directly and economically, prioritizing denotative clarity of the target text.

There are far fewer translation techniques categorized into the cultural dimension, contributing 18.7% of the total. Amplification is the most frequent technique here (10.4%), followed by description (4.2%) and adaptation (3.1%). Established equivalent appears only once throughout out the entire book. This suggests that cultural mediation, though indispensable for heritage-specific concepts, is in fact deployed selectively.

Finally, the communicative dimension is the least represented, with a combined frequency of just 3.1%. Discursive creation equates to 2.1%, and compensation to 1.0%. This marginal presence, we argue, demonstrates that the translators' adaptive efforts are overwhelmingly directed towards getting the referential content right where necessary. Therefore, little intervention is needed to reshape the message for rhetorical effect or reader engagement.

As Figure 3 showcases, the preference for linguistic-dimensional translation technique is consistent across all categories examined. Aside from this, what is perhaps more revealing is the near-absence of communicative techniques, which in part suggests that the material-oriented nature of these ICH craft terms may exert a stronger effect on translator choice than abstract considerations of audience reception.

5. Discussion

The results shed light on a clear and systematic preference pattern in the translating ICH traditional craft terms in *Huzhou Intangible Cultural Heritage*. These findings invite further interpretation in this section.

The predominance of the linguistic dimension can be attributed to the primary referential function of the terms under examination. Compared with performing arts, ICH traditional craft terms in this corpus include concrete artifacts, tools, materials, and mechanical operations. Terms such as "silkworm cocoon", "silk", "goat hair", and "being fired in the kiln" refer to tangible entities or procedural steps that have close equivalents in the target language and culture. In such cases, literal translation in the linguistic dimension achieves the highest economic efficiency by establishing direct referential mappings with minimal semantic distortion. Interestingly, this observation echoes with the previous finding that non-literary translation tends to favor denotative over connotative equivalence [20]. More crucially, it complicates the approach that has characterized much of the existing ICH translation literature. Studies focusing on performing arts or oral traditions have reported a higher frequency of cultural and communicative dimensional adaptation and selection [10,11,14], because the source texts involve culturally embedded metaphors, rhythmic structures, and performative contexts. In stark contrast, the ICH craft terms in this corpus charts a safer path towards adaptive selection. Conceptually sufficient, literal translation might in fact reduce the risk of communicative failure. The preference for linguistic dimensional techniques in this bilingual book can thus be adaptation to both the source-text feature and the target-reader expectation of clarity and precision.

That being said, the occurrence of cultural and communicative dimension techniques, at 18.7% and 3.1% respectively, flags up a recurring tension in ICH translation: how to preserve culturally specific knowledge and ensure target-text readability at the same time. Upon closer examination, the techniques are jointly conditioned by semantic decomposability and cultural transplantability. This insight, we might add, extends the framework's descriptive power beyond classification, pushing it toward a more dynamic understanding of translator behavior, or translator-centeredness [5]. In our case of Huzhou ICH craft terms, the nesting logic is partly shaped by the referential and material-oriented nature of the source texts.

Despite our endeavors to attain precision, several limitations should be owned up to. Firstly, classifying employed translation techniques into three dimensions, for all the independent coding and consensus-based resolution, inevitably leads to a degree of analytical subjectivity. Secondly, the issue of blurred boundary arises, because

"multidimensional transplantation" will be likely to occur when translators change a single-dimensional translation treatment in the wake of an overall consideration of a whole sentence, paragraph, passage, and text [8]. That is, one technique may fulfill linguistic, cultural, and communicative functions at the same time, although we mainly focus on ICH craft terms at the lexical or phrasal level. Thirdly, the ambiguity further points to the framework's inherent orientation towards post-hoc product analysis, rather than process tracing of translator cognition. In this way, it may be hard to justify how translators ecologically adapt and select. Fourthly, albeit representative of Huzhou, the corpus is compiled exclusively from a single bilingual publication and limited in scope, yet the findings are no less important.

In light of all these, it is advised that future research should conduct interviews with translators, or ethnographic process-tracing methods to capture pre-translation cognitive decisions. Data as such can prop up the product-oriented analysis in this study and offer a bigger picture of the adaptation-selection dynamics. Moreover, researchers may extend the existing methodological framework to multimodal ICH communication, such as audio-visual and digital dissemination. After all, the extent to which readers resonate with the translation version is what matters. Ultimately, the generalizability of the findings remains to be delved into, be it to other publications, other regions, or even other four ICH domains.

6. Conclusions

This study examines the techniques employed in the translation of ICH traditional craft terms in Huzhou, and in particular, investigates how they instantiate the three-dimensional transformations in Eco-translatology. Drawing upon the taxonomy of translation techniques, the study compiles a parallel bilingual corpus, breaks down 96 bilingual term pairs, and maps out a corner of ICH craft term translation, which has not seen much empirical works in ecological translation studies.

Overall, the findings from this bilingual book reveal that translators predominantly rely on literal translation and borrowing as primary techniques, supplemented by linguistic compression, amplification, and adaptation. The linguistic dimension accounts for the largest proportion; the cultural and communicative dimensions may play more of supporting roles. In short, this pattern can be viewed as an adaptive response to the referential nature of ICH items. The best case scenario always turns out this way.

Zooming out, this study has demonstrated that the distribution of translation techniques varies from that observed in other ICH genres, which cautions against one-size-fits-all models in ICH translation research. Real value can be gained in the clarification of the three-dimensional framework as an analytical instrument for ICH term translation, offering a replicable coding paradigm for future empirical studies. Practically speaking, the findings also provide adaptable approaches to practitioners in the relevant line of work, particularly those engaged in the international dissemination and standardization of ICH terms.

Ecological adaptation and selection, in translation as in nature, has always been about the "survival of the fittest" in the environment. The task ahead is to ensure what survives in ICH term translation is what thrives in the linguistic, cultural, and communicative dimensions, so that global readers can better resonate with the ICH essence.

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