Study on German Translation Strategies of Chinese Characteristic Vocabulary

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Abstract: With the deepening of China's international exchanges, Chinese characteristic vocabulary, as a carrier of Chinese culture and national characteristics, plays an increasingly important role in cross-cultural communication. However, due to the differences in language systems, cultural connotations and ways of thinking between Chinese and German, the translation of Chinese characteristic vocabulary into German faces many challenges, and there is a lack of systematic and targeted translation strategies. This study aims to explore scientific and applicable German translation strategies for Chinese characteristic vocabulary. the research methods adopted include literature review, case analysis and comparative study. First, it combs the definition, classification and cultural connotation of Chinese characteristic vocabulary; then, it collects a large number of Chinese characteristic vocabulary and their existing German translation examples, and classifies and sorts out these examples; finally, it analyzes the advantages and disadvantages of different translation methods through comparative study, and explores the influencing factors of translation strategy selection. the research results show that the translation of Chinese characteristic vocabulary into German should adhere to the principle of balancing cultural connotation transmission and target language acceptability, and different translation strategies such as literal translation, free translation, transliteration plus explanation, and borrowing can be adopted according to the types of vocabulary and specific communication scenarios. This study enriches the research on the translation of Chinese characteristic vocabulary into German, and provides practical reference for translators to carry out relevant translation work, which is of great significance for promoting the accurate dissemination of Chinese culture in German-speaking countries.

Keywords: Chinese Characteristic Vocabulary; German Translation; Translation Strategy; Cross-Cultural Communication; Cultural Connotation

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background and Significance

Cross-cultural communication has become an indispensable part of global integration, and vocabulary, as the basic unit of language, serves as a core carrier for the transmission of cultural and social connotations. Chinese characteristic vocabulary, formed in the specific context of China's historical evolution, social development and cultural accumulation, bears unique ideological connotations and value orientations that reflect China's national conditions. With the continuous deepening of China's participation in global governance and international cooperation, the frequency of Chinese characteristic vocabulary appearing in international exchanges has increased significantly, making their accurate translation into different languages an important link to ensure effective cross-cultural communication. German, as one of the major languages in the European continent, is widely used in political, economic, cultural and academic fields in German-speaking countries such as Germany, Austria and Switzerland. the accurate German translation of Chinese characteristic vocabulary is not only conducive to promoting the understanding of Chinese culture and social development by German-speaking audiences, but also lays a solid foundation for in-depth cooperation between China and German-speaking countries in various fields. However, due to the obvious differences between Chinese and German in language structure, cultural background and thinking mode, the translation of Chinese characteristic vocabulary often faces the dilemma of balancing cultural connotation retention and target

language acceptability. In this context, exploring scientific and applicable German translation strategies for Chinese characteristic vocabulary has important theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, it can enrich the research system of cross-linguistic translation, especially the translation theory between Sino-German languages; practically, it can provide effective guidance for translators, official document compilers and cross-cultural communication practitioners, and improve the quality and efficiency of cross-cultural information transmission.

1.2 Review of Domestic and Foreign Research Status

Domestic research on the translation of Chinese characteristic vocabulary has achieved certain results. Relevant studies mainly focus on the translation strategies of Chinese characteristic vocabulary into English, and have carried out in-depth discussions on the definition, classification and translation principles of Chinese characteristic vocabulary. Some scholars have explored the translation methods of political, economic and cultural characteristic vocabulary based on case analysis, and put forward translation strategies such as literal translation, free translation and transliteration with explanation. However, there are relatively few studies focusing on the German translation of Chinese characteristic vocabulary, and most of the existing studies are scattered case analyses, lacking systematic and in-depth exploration of translation strategies and influencing factors. Foreign research on Chinese-German translation mainly focuses on the translation of literary works and general texts, and there is little special research on Chinese characteristic vocabulary. Foreign scholars pay more attention to the acceptability of translated texts in the target language, but due to the lack of in-depth understanding of Chinese culture, their research on the translation of vocabulary with unique Chinese cultural connotations has certain limitations. In general, the existing research has not formed a systematic theoretical framework and practical guidance system for the German translation of Chinese characteristic vocabulary, and there is a lack of targeted research on the translation of emerging Chinese characteristic vocabulary in the context of new international exchanges. This study aims to make up for the deficiencies of existing research and provide a more comprehensive and in-depth theoretical and practical reference for the German translation of Chinese characteristic vocabulary.

1.3 Research Ideas and Methods

This study takes Chinese characteristic vocabulary and its German translation as the research object, and adopts a combination of multiple research methods to carry out in-depth research. First, the literature review method is used to systematically sort out the relevant research results at home and abroad on Chinese characteristic vocabulary, Sino-German translation theory and cross-cultural communication, so as to clarify the research status and theoretical basis of the topic. On this basis, the case analysis method is adopted to select typical Chinese characteristic vocabulary covering political, economic, cultural and social fields, collect their existing German translation examples from official documents, authoritative media reports, academic papers and other channels, and conduct in-depth analysis of these cases. Then, the comparative study method is used to compare and analyze the advantages and disadvantages of different translation methods, and explore the differences in translation effects of the same vocabulary in different contexts. Finally, the inductive deduction method is used to summarize the influencing factors of the German translation of Chinese characteristic vocabulary, and construct targeted translation strategies. In the process of research, the selection of research cases follows the principles of representativeness, typicality and timeliness, ensuring that the research results have universal applicability and practical guiding significance.

1.4 Research Content and Innovations

The main research content of this study includes four parts: first, defining the connotation and scope of Chinese characteristic vocabulary, and constructing a scientific classification system; second, analyzing the cultural connotation of Chinese characteristic vocabulary and its influence on translation; third, sorting out the current situation of German translation of Chinese characteristic vocabulary, and summarizing the existing problems and their causes; fourth, constructing targeted German translation strategies for different types of Chinese characteristic vocabulary, and clarifying their applicable scenarios. the innovations of this study are mainly reflected in the following two

aspects: on the one hand, it systematically explores the German translation of Chinese characteristic vocabulary from a multi-dimensional perspective, breaking through the limitations of scattered case studies in existing research, and constructing a relatively complete translation strategy system; on the other hand, it combines the current hot issues of international exchanges and the actual needs of cross-cultural communication, and pays special attention to the translation of emerging Chinese characteristic vocabulary, making the research results more targeted and timeliness. In addition, this study also focuses on the balance between cultural connotation transmission and target language acceptability, and puts forward operable translation suggestions, which enriches the research content of Sino-German cross-cultural translation.

2. Definition, Classification and Cultural Connotation of Chinese Characteristic Vocabulary

2.1 Definition Criteria of Chinese Characteristic Vocabulary

The definition of Chinese characteristic vocabulary should be based on the dual dimensions of language and culture, and comprehensively considered from the aspects of connotation, formation background and usage scenario. From the perspective of connotation, Chinese characteristic vocabulary refers to the vocabulary that can reflect China's unique historical and cultural traditions, social system, values and development achievements, and has obvious Chinese cultural attributes that are different from other countries and regions. From the perspective of formation background, such vocabulary is often formed in specific historical periods or social development stages, closely related to China's national conditions and social reality. From the perspective of usage scenarios, Chinese characteristic vocabulary is widely used in official documents, news reports, cultural exchanges and other fields, and is an important carrier for expressing Chinese voices and spreading Chinese culture. It should be emphasized that the definition of Chinese characteristic vocabulary is not static, but dynamic and developmental. With the development of society and the deepening of international exchanges, new Chinese characteristic vocabulary will continue to emerge, and the connotation and extension of existing vocabulary may also change. Therefore, the definition of Chinese characteristic vocabulary should be combined with the current social reality and development needs to ensure its timeliness and accuracy.

2.2 Classification System of Chinese Characteristic Vocabulary

Based on the definition criteria of Chinese characteristic vocabulary, combined with the actual situation of vocabulary usage and cultural connotation, this study constructs a multi-level classification system of Chinese characteristic vocabulary. the specific classification is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Classification System of Chinese Characteristic Vocabulary

Category	Definition	Examples
Political characteristic vocabulary	Vocabulary related to China's political system, political concepts and political activities	Socialism with Chinese characteristics; Whole-process people's democracy; Governance capacity modernization
Economic characteristic vocabulary	Vocabulary related to China's economic system, economic policies and economic development achievements	Dual circulation; High-quality development; Rural revitalization
Cultural characteristic vocabulary	Vocabulary related to China's traditional culture, cultural traditions and cultural phenomena	Confucianism; Yin and Yang; Intangible cultural heritage
Social characteristic vocabulary	Vocabulary related to China's social structure, social life and social issues	Precision poverty alleviation; Community governance; Elderly care service system

This classification system covers the main fields of Chinese characteristic vocabulary, and each category has clear connotation and typical examples, which provides a basis for the in-depth analysis of the cultural connotation of vocabulary and the exploration of translation strategies. At the same time, the classification system also has certain flexibility, which can accommodate new types of Chinese characteristic vocabulary emerging with social development.

2.3 Analysis of Cultural Connotation of Chinese Characteristic Vocabulary

Chinese characteristic vocabulary is deeply rooted in Chinese culture and carries rich cultural connotations, which is mainly reflected in the following aspects: first, the reflection of traditional cultural values. Many Chinese characteristic vocabularies inherit the essence of Chinese traditional culture, such as "harmony between man and nature" which reflects the ecological concept of traditional Chinese culture, and "benevolence and righteousness" which reflects the moral values of traditional Chinese culture. These vocabularies contain the unique way of thinking and value pursuit of the Chinese nation. Second, the embodiment of social system and development concept. Political and economic characteristic vocabularies such as "Socialism with Chinese characteristics" and "High-quality development" reflect China's unique social system and development path, and carry the exploration and practice of China's national development. Third, the record of historical and cultural traditions. Cultural characteristic vocabularies such as "Confucianism" and "Intangible cultural heritage" record the historical evolution and cultural accumulation of China, and are an important part of Chinese cultural heritage. the cultural connotation of Chinese characteristic vocabulary is the core of its translation. If the cultural connotation is lost in the translation process, it will lead to the deviation of the target language audience's understanding of the original meaning of the vocabulary, and even affect the effect of cross-cultural communication. Therefore, in the process of German translation, it is necessary to fully understand and grasp the cultural connotation of Chinese characteristic vocabulary, and take corresponding translation strategies to realize the effective transmission of cultural connotation.

3. Current Situation and Problem Analysis of German Translation of Chinese Characteristic Vocabulary

3.1 Sorting out the Existing Practice of German Translation of Chinese Characteristic Vocabulary

At present, the German translation of Chinese characteristic vocabulary is mainly carried out through three channels: official translation, media translation and academic translation. Official translation mainly refers to the translation of Chinese characteristic vocabulary in official documents, diplomatic speeches and other official texts released by government departments and international organizations. This kind of translation pays attention to the accuracy and authority of the text, and often adopts relatively fixed translation methods. Media translation refers to the translation of Chinese characteristic vocabulary in news reports, documentaries and other media works released by mainstream media at home and abroad. This kind of translation pays more attention to the readability and acceptability of the text, and will appropriately adjust the translation methods according to the audience's reading habits. Academic translation refers to the translation of Chinese characteristic vocabulary in academic papers, monographs and other academic works. This kind of translation pays attention to the academic nature and rigor of the text, and often carries out in-depth discussion and analysis of the translation of vocabulary. Through the investigation of a large number of translation examples, it is found that the current German translation of Chinese characteristic vocabulary has formed a certain number of fixed translation versions, especially for some core political and economic characteristic vocabulary. For example, "Socialism with Chinese characteristics" is usually translated as "Sozialismus mit chinesischen Merkmalen", and "Rural revitalization" is usually translated as "Ländliche Wiederbelebung". However, for some emerging Chinese characteristic vocabulary and cultural characteristic vocabulary, there are great differences in the existing translation versions, and there is no unified and authoritative translation standard.

3.2 Main Problems in German Translation of Chinese Characteristic Vocabulary

Despite the formation of some fixed translation versions, the current German translation of Chinese characteristic vocabulary still faces many problems, mainly reflected in the following aspects: first, the loss of cultural connotation. In the process of translation, some translators only pay attention to the literal meaning of the vocabulary and ignore the transmission of its cultural connotation, resulting in the target language audience can not understand the deep meaning of the vocabulary. For example, the translation of "Yin and Yang" simply as "Yin und Yang" without additional explanation makes it difficult for German-

speaking audiences who are not familiar with Chinese traditional culture to understand its connotation of mutual opposition and unity. Second, the inconsistency of translation versions. For some emerging Chinese characteristic vocabulary, there are multiple translation versions in different texts, which leads to confusion for the target language audience. For example, the translation of "Dual circulation" has versions such as "Doppelter Kreislauf" and "Zweifacher Kreislauf", and there is no unified standard. Third, the poor acceptability of the target language. Some translations are too literal, resulting in cumbersome and unnatural expressions in German, which is not in line with the language habits of German-speaking audiences. For example, the literal translation of "Whole-process people's democracy" as "Volksdemokratie im gesamten Prozess" is grammatically correct, but it is not in line with the expression habits of German political vocabulary, and the audience's acceptance is low. Fourth, the lack of targeted translation for different scenarios. At present, most translations do not take into account the differences in communication scenarios, and adopt the same translation method for the same vocabulary in different scenarios, resulting in poor translation effects. For example, the translation of "Intangible cultural heritage" in academic papers and popular science texts should be different, but the current translation versions are basically the same, which can not meet the needs of different communication scenarios.

3.3 Analysis of the Causes of Problems in German Translation of Chinese Characteristic Vocabulary

The problems existing in the German translation of Chinese characteristic vocabulary are caused by multiple factors, mainly including the following aspects: first, the differences between Chinese and German language systems. Chinese is an isolated language, while German is an inflectional language. There are great differences between the two in word formation, grammar and sentence structure. This kind of language difference makes it difficult to find completely corresponding expressions in German when translating Chinese characteristic vocabulary, which easily leads to the loss of meaning or cumbersome expressions. Second, the differences in cultural background. There are obvious differences between Chinese and German cultures in values, ways of thinking and historical traditions. German-speaking audiences have little understanding of Chinese unique cultural phenomena and social systems, which makes it difficult for them to understand the cultural connotation contained in Chinese characteristic vocabulary, and also increases the difficulty of translation. Third, the lack of unified translation standards. At present, there is no official and unified German translation standard for Chinese characteristic vocabulary, which leads to translators choosing translation methods according to their own understanding and experience, resulting in inconsistent translation versions. Fourth, the lack of professional translation talents. Sino-German translation requires translators to have a good grasp of both Chinese and German languages, as well as in-depth understanding of the cultural background and social reality of both countries. However, there are relatively few professional translators who meet these requirements at present, which leads to the low quality of some translations. Fifth, the insufficient attention to the translation of emerging vocabulary. With the rapid development of society, new Chinese characteristic vocabulary emerges continuously, but the research and translation of these vocabulary lag behind, resulting in the lack of targeted translation strategies and methods. the above factors interact with each other, leading to the current problems in the German translation of Chinese characteristic vocabulary.

4. Construction of German Translation Strategies for Chinese Characteristic Vocabulary

4.1 Basic Principles of German Translation of Chinese Characteristic Vocabulary

Combined with the characteristics of Chinese characteristic vocabulary and the requirements of cross-cultural communication, this study puts forward three basic principles for the German translation of Chinese characteristic vocabulary: the principle of semantic accuracy, the principle of cultural connotation transmission and the principle of target language acceptability. the principle of semantic accuracy requires that the translated version must accurately express the original meaning of Chinese characteristic vocabulary, without deviation or distortion. This is the basic requirement of translation and the premise of ensuring effective cross-cultural

communication. the principle of cultural connotation transmission requires that translators should fully consider the cultural connotation contained in Chinese characteristic vocabulary in the translation process, and take corresponding translation methods to realize the effective transmission of cultural connotation. This is an important means to promote the target language audience's understanding of Chinese culture. the principle of target language acceptability requires that the translated version should conform to the language habits and expression rules of German, have good readability and fluency, and be easily accepted by the target language audience. the three principles are interrelated and mutually restrictive. In the translation process, it is necessary to balance the relationship between the three, and not one-sidedly emphasize one principle while ignoring the others. Only by adhering to these three basic principles can the quality of the German translation of Chinese characteristic vocabulary be effectively improved.
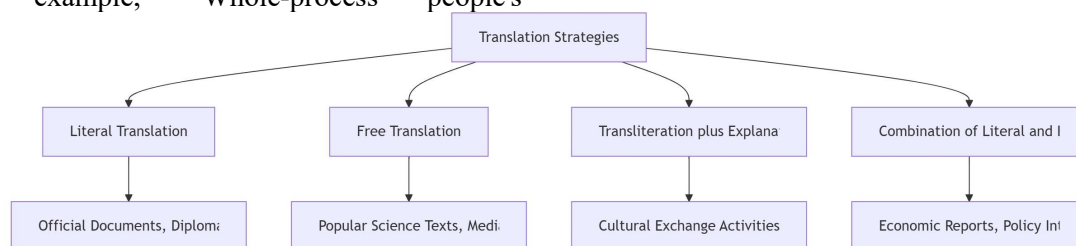
4.2 German Translation Strategies for Different Types of Chinese Characteristic Vocabulary

According to the classification system of Chinese characteristic vocabulary constructed in Chapter 2, combined with the basic translation principles, this study puts forward targeted German translation strategies for different types of Chinese characteristic vocabulary. For political characteristic vocabulary, the literal translation method should be mainly adopted to ensure the accuracy and authority of the translation. At the same time, for some vocabulary with strong cultural specificity, the method of literal translation plus explanation can be adopted to help the target language audience understand the connotation of the vocabulary. For example, "Whole-process people's democracy" can be translated as "Volksdemokratie im gesamten Prozess – eine Demokratie, die den gesamten Prozess von der Teilhabe bis zur Überwachung umfasst". For economic characteristic vocabulary, the combination of literal translation and free translation can be adopted. On the premise of ensuring the accuracy of the core meaning, the translation should be adjusted appropriately according to the expression habits of German economic vocabulary to improve the acceptability of the translation. For example, "Dual circulation" can be translated as "Doppelter Kreislauf (innere und äußere Kreisläufe)". For cultural characteristic vocabulary, the transliteration plus explanation method should be mainly adopted to realize the effective transmission of cultural connotation. For example, "Yin and Yang" can be translated as "Yin und Yang – zwei komplementäre Kräfte im chinesischen Denken, die sich gegenseitig bedingen und ergänzen". For social characteristic vocabulary, the free translation method can be appropriately adopted according to the specific connotation of the vocabulary and the needs of the communication scenario to ensure the readability and understandability of the translation. For example, "Precision poverty alleviation" can be translated as "Präzise Armutsbekämpfung".

4.3 Analysis of Applicable Scenarios of German Translation Strategies for Chinese Characteristic Vocabulary

The applicable scenarios of German translation strategies for Chinese characteristic vocabulary are closely related to the purpose of communication and the characteristics of the audience. the specific applicable scenarios of different translation strategies are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Applicable Scenarios of German Translation Strategies for Chinese Characteristic Vocabulary

In official documents and diplomatic speeches, the literal translation method should be mainly adopted to ensure the authority and seriousness of the text. In popular science texts and media reports, the free translation method can be appropriately adopted to improve the readability

and acceptability of the text. In cultural exchange activities and academic papers, the transliteration plus explanation method should be adopted to realize the in-depth transmission of cultural connotation. In economic reports and policy interpretations, the combination of literal translation and free translation can be adopted to balance the accuracy of the text and the acceptability of the target language. In the actual translation process, translators should flexibly choose translation strategies according to the specific communication scenario and audience characteristics to ensure the effectiveness of cross-cultural communication.

5. Conclusion

This study takes Chinese characteristic vocabulary and its German translation as the research object, systematically explores the definition, classification and cultural connotation of Chinese characteristic vocabulary, sorts out the current situation of German translation of Chinese characteristic vocabulary, analyzes the existing problems and their causes, and constructs targeted German translation strategies for different types of Chinese characteristic vocabulary. the research results show that the German translation of Chinese characteristic vocabulary should adhere to the three basic principles of semantic accuracy, cultural connotation transmission and target language acceptability; for different types of Chinese characteristic vocabulary, different translation strategies such as literal translation, free translation, transliteration plus explanation and combination of literal and free translation should be adopted; the selection of translation strategies should be closely combined with the communication scenario and audience characteristics to ensure the effectiveness of cross-cultural communication. This study enriches the research system of Sino-German cross-cultural translation, and provides practical guidance for translators and cross-cultural communication practitioners. However, this study also has certain limitations. the selection of research cases is limited to some typical Chinese characteristic vocabulary, and there is a lack of in-depth research on the translation of vocabulary in some specific fields. In the future research, we can further expand the scope of research cases, carry out comparative research on the translation effects of different translation strategies, and explore more scientific and applicable translation methods. At the same time, we can also strengthen the research on the translation of emerging Chinese characteristic vocabulary, so as to better meet the needs of cross-cultural communication in the new era.

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