



Crowdsourcing Translation: A New Approach of Chinese Culture Translation

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Abstract

In the information age, the rapid development of internet technology plays an important role in the rise of crowdsourcing translation, which also innovates the traditional translation mode by its unique advantages. Nowadays, with the rapid increase of China's international status and cultural prosperity, crowdsourcing, as an emerging approach, is more and more influential on Chinese culture translation activities. This paper firstly gives an overview of the study of Chinese culture translation; secondly points out the negative aspects of Chinese culture translation and thirdly discusses the crowdsourcing translation's function and significance for Chinese culture translation. Finally, some limitation and prospects are put forward.

Key words: Crowdsourcing translation; Chinese culture translation; Negative aspects; Approach

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1. INTRODUCTION

The term "crowdsourcing" was first mentioned in 2006 by the journalist of the magazine *Wired*, Jeff Howe, and later the concept received a great deal of attention from people from all walks of life, followed by his book *Crowdsourcing: Why the Power of Crowd is Driving the*

Future of Business, which was officially published in 2008. The core idea of crowdsourcing is to convert human awareness, wisdom, experience and skills into practical benefits through the Internet as a solution to problems in technology, life and learning (Howe, 2008). More specifically, crowdsourcing is the voluntary "assignment" of tasks by a company or organization to non-specific volunteers, both professionals and amateurs, primarily through online platforms. The cost of problem solving in this way is significantly lower than the cost of traditional problem solving by employees.

Throughout history, foreign cultures have been translated into China for the purpose of learning about other countries' knowledge, culture, science and technology. With the increasing international status of China, the state has paid more and more attention to the "going out" of Chinese culture, and more and more scholars have begun to pay attention to the translation of Chinese culture. In the age of information, the role of the Internet in cross-cultural communication cannot be ignored, and it is worthwhile to study how to take advantage of the Internet to better promote cultural translation and discover new ways to translate Chinese culture. Therefore, as a "new star" in the translation field, crowdsourcing translation, which has caught the express train of the Internet, has launched a new chapter of Chinese culture translation.

2. THE STUDY OF CHINESE CULTURE TRANSLATION

2.1 The Connotation and Achievement of Chinese Culture Translation

At a time when Chinese culture translation is attracting much attention, the connotation of it culture has been warmly discussed. Professor Tianzhen Xie (2013), a famous scholar in China, points out that Chinese culture

“going out” is not simply a matter of translation.” (Xie, 2013). He argues that language conversion does not mean that Chinese culture has “gone out”, but that the spread of Chinese culture involves a variety of cross-cultural and cross-national factors, and it is closely related to the ways and means of spreading culture and the reception of the audience. In addition, from both narrow and broad sense, Weihe Zhong and Man Feng (2011) define Chinese culture translation as a linguistic and cultural exchange activity, as well as an activity in which the national cultural form is transmitted to a foreign country through a foreign language medium (Zhong & Feng, 2011). Therefore, in general, Chinese culture translation is an activity of translating the national culture into foreign languages on the world stage, thus achieving the purpose of cross-cultural communication and exchange.

With the China’s increasing international status, Chinese culture foreign translation has also received more and more attention, and studies on this area have been published constantly, gradually promoting the development of Chinese culture translation. Linxin Liang and Mingwu Liang (2016) have pointed out that the achievements of Chinese culture translation can be summarized in three aspects: research institutions, talent training and academic achievements. Firstly, in order to integrate Chinese and foreign languages and achieve the best effect of cultural communication, various scientific research institutions for cultural translation have been established one after another, such as “Chinese Culture Translation Workshop” and “Chinese Works Translation Promotion Center”; Secondly, the state has begun to pay attention to the cultivation of translation talents in order to achieve high-quality translation of Chinese culture, such as the establishment of translation-related majors in major universities and the cultivation of batches of translation talents; Thirdly, due to the support of national policies and the increasing international cultural exchanges and cooperation, many scholars have devoted themselves to the research of Chinese culture translation and the topics of it have been enriched and diversified. Their topics involve politics and economics, medicine and law, as well as film and media, etc (Liang & Liang, 2016). The connotation of Chinese culture has been interpreted in multiple levels and the academic achievements have been enriched.

Moreover, combining the interdisciplinary characteristics of culture translation, scholars have been drawing on interdisciplinary perspectives, analyzing Chinese culture translation from various perspectives, and using interdisciplinary theoretical knowledge and methods to analyze the culture objects, which has also promoted the construction of Chinese culture translation theory and practice. In addition, with the development of Chinese culture translation, many have gradually diversified their choice of research objects from the initial focus on the

receptive subjects of Chinese culture translation to its receptive effects, dissemination subjects and modes, etc.

2.2 The Negative Aspects of Chinese Culture Translation

After research, it can be found that the study of Chinese culture translation is multi-faceted and complex, but a closer look reveals that the following problems still exist in Chinese culture translation:

(1) The single category of texts in culture translations is not conducive to Chinese cultural dissemination. Traditionally, the mode of Chinese culture translation is mainly carried out by domestic publishing houses, so the investment capital is high. And in the selection of translation objects, most of the publishing houses only invest capital in the translation of Chinese classic literature, but fewer publishers are willing to carry out large-scale culture translation work of multiple categories, resulting in a single category of texts in culture translation, which hinders the pace of Chinese culture “going out”. In this regard, Fang Wang (2020) points out that because of the low consideration of national conditions for cultural communication, the current translation of cultural texts is not well targeted and the market is not sufficiently grasped, ignoring the reading preferences and habits of foreign audiences, and that the effectiveness of the translated texts is greatly reduced. Moreover, she argues that for a long time, the selection of materials for translation is influenced by the deep-rooted prejudices of Chinese perceptions, making the category of texts for the dissemination of Chinese culture relatively homogeneous, with most of them being classical Chinese literary works. And she also points out that the target groups of Chinese culture translations are mainly concentrated in overseas Chinese communities or economically developed regions and there is a lack of cultural communication to foreign local people. These factors have limited the pace of Chinese cultural translations (Wang, 2020).

(2) Chinese Culture translation is costly but relatively ineffective. In the process of Chinese culture translation, the basic mode of it has long relied on the traditional translation mode, i.e., a few elite translators or co-translators, but the limited translation and dissemination channels and high capital costs have made Chinese culture translation ineffective. Zhonglian Huang, Rongguang Yang and Yi Liu (2017) have pointed out that Chinese culture translations are currently uni-modal, which focuses too much on the textual communication of paper media and ignoring the role of Internet-based multi-modal textual communication; and that there is a bias in the perception of the reasons for poor translation quality, ignoring factors such as improper selection of translation objects and ineffective means of promotion and communication. They also assert that it is necessary to seize the advantages of Internet technology to innovate translation technology in

order to innovate translation technology and adapt to the development trend of language economy (Huang, Yang & Liu, 2017).

3. THE STUDY OF CROWDSOURCING TRANSLATION'S FUNCTIONS ON CHINESE CULTURE TRANSLATION

In studying the feasibility and effectiveness of crowdsourcing translation, American scholar F. J. Sobol (2012), with reference to professional translation, points out that crowdsourcing translation is a translation model established on the basis of the development of computer and information technology, which has excellent qualities of high efficiency, low cost, short time consuming and high openness (Sobol, 2012). Similarly, Chinese scholar Rong Fan (2020) has also discussed a relatively clear and straightforward view on the essence of crowdsourcing translation. He argues that the essence of crowdsourcing translation is that online platforms or publishers post crowdsourcing tasks online and split the task into smaller task contents, and internet users who are interested in the task and have good language proficiency can thus become part of the crowdsourcing translation activity (Fan, 2020).

Thus, considering the fine features of crowdsourcing translation, it's well-grounded that crowdsourcing translation may provide some approaches to solve the above deficiencies in the Chinese culture translation.

Firstly, regarding the problem of single text category in the Chinese culture translation, Zhonglian Huang (2017) emphasizes that online translation has the advantages of wide dissemination, various modes, low cost and fast speed, which can open up a new approach for the foreign translation of Chinese culture. At the same time, he also discussed the technical planning of online translation platforms and proposed "cloud translation" based on machine translation and cloud computing, which has a certain guiding effect on the development trend of Chinese culture translation through crowdsourcing translation mode (Huang, 2017). On this basis, some scholars have put forward innovative ideas, pointing out that the application of corpus can play an important role in the Chinese culture translation. In the study of the translation of Chinese cultural core words, with the help of the corpus of foreign language countries, Na Xin (2018) adopts a corpus research method to analyze the dissemination of Chinese cultural core words abroad through word frequency. And the large amount of real corpus obtained by this means is very helpful to explore the best strategy for the Chinese culture translation, which is also an important guidance for enriching the text categories and targeting the materials (Xin, 2018). Later, some scholars have also suggested that artificial intelligence can also be combined with crowdsourcing

translation to improve the accuracy of translation, such as Lu Shao (2019). She proposes that in order to reduce the complexity and difficulty of translation and improve the quality of translation the use of artificial intelligence technology to disassemble and annotate the original text materials before translation (Shao, 2019). Therefore, combining the products of the Internet, such as big data and artificial intelligence with crowdsourcing translation can also help compensate for the lack of a single category of Chinese culture translation texts, and can help improve the accuracy and relevance of translation texts at the same time.

Secondly, with regard to the disproportionate problem of investment and achievements in Chinese culture translation, crowdsourcing translation also points out the direction for it. As an emerging product in the era of the Internet, the issuer of crowdsourcing translation can issue crowdsourcing translation tasks with the help of the network platform and recruit translators in the network, thus the cost of employing personnel is relatively low, or even almost zero for some projects; and the instantaneous nature of the Internet also makes the task completion time greatly reduced, so that the capital investment and time cost of enterprises or organizations can be effectively reduced and controlled. Liping Jia (2015) has concluded that the ability to utilize the complementary nature of different resources and skills is what makes crowdsourcing translation so advantageous; it connects different individuals through the Internet, and the process of frequent communication and even confrontation between different individuals in the network ultimately allows for the birth of group wisdom with both depth of knowledge and inclusiveness (Jia, 2015). In this way, the translation can be more efficient and meet the information need of people more instantly.

Thirdly, crowdsourcing translation can also be a response to the shortcomings at the translator level. Crowdsourcing translation can integrate the resources of translators, strengthen the communication and exchange among translators and jointly improve the quality of translation. In their study of the cultural space of crowdsourcing translation, Aiping Mo and Junjie Hao (2018) have pointed out that crowdsourcing translation is a typical activity of cross-cultural communication, and it has the potential to become a social public service platform dedicated to cultural communication. This systematic discussion provides a reference for the study of the translator motivation and the cultural exchange and cooperation of Chinese culture foreign translation (Mo & Hao, 2018). In addition, Cai Cai, Tiexiang Liu and Dongchun Qu (2019) also emphasize the important role of high-standard translators in Chinese cultural communication, and a major advantage of crowdsourcing translation lies in its ability to help find professional translators across countries and fields in a comprehensive

manner. They believe that based on networking, it makes it possible for multiple people to communicate online translations, and translators can communicate with readers on translation contents, review or revise the translation at any time. This process of joint participation between translators and readers enhances the efficiency of cultural dissemination and increases the recognition of Chinese culture translation works in the world (Cai, Liu & Qu, 2019). Therefore, through the mode of crowdsourcing translation, translators from all over the world can independently choose whether to carry out translation practice according to their own abilities, so as to avoid the quality problems of the translation due to their insufficient knowledge and cultural literacy; at the same time, the convenient and fast communication method in the network platform can also strengthen the communication and cooperation among translators, which makes the culture translation more efficient.

4. CONCLUSION

Recently, with the Chinese culture translation more and more thriving in China, crowdsourcing translation has gradually become the focus center among researchers. Combining the cultural availability of crowdsourcing translation with its advantages of wide range of information dissemination and instant efficiency, it can greatly contribute to the development of Chinese culture translation, enabling more professional translators or amateur enthusiasts around the world to get familiar with Chinese culture. These online users also indirectly act as intermediaries for the dissemination of Chinese culture, helping to spread more information with Chinese cultural characteristics that meet local needs and increase the acceptance of Chinese culture translations.

Reviewing the previous study, it can be found that the study on crowdsourcing translation about translators, cultural relevance and text categories has been progressing well, and its potential contribution to Chinese culture translation is obvious as well, while the study on the possible copyright infringement in the process of crowdsourcing translation has relatively lagged behind. Similarly, in the field of Chinese culture translation, the copyright of translated texts has long been a concern for translators and publishers. Under the traditional model, the copyright of texts translated is usually obtained through negotiation with the copyright holders by formal institutions such as publishing houses, but this process often takes a long time and tends to lose the effectiveness of the information. In order to make crowdsourcing translation and Chinese culture translations further develop and introduce the support of Internet in the pursuit of effectiveness, the copyright needed be fully guaranteed.

Meanwhile, the application of Internet products to various kinds of research has gradually emerged and flourished, such as the application of corpus and artificial intelligence. Then, as an emerging product in the information age, blockchain can probably be applied to crowdsourcing translation and Chinese culture translation. The advantages of blockchain have been reflected in many aspects of Internet applications. It has functions similar to those of a corpus and has superb notation functions, which can integrate various rich resources and a large number of translation talents, thus providing guarantees for the text quality of crowdsourcing translation. And the unique encryption algorithm of blockchain can also guarantee information security when handling information, which, when combined with crowdsourcing translation, will greatly help strengthen the trust between text contactors, i.e., translators and the initiators of crowdsourcing translation activities or translators and readers. Thus, this information encryption function of blockchain also has certain reference for solving the copyright problem involved in crowdsourcing translation. As a manifestation of online popular culture, crowdsourcing translation to some extent embodies the transformation direction of translation. And if it is to become a significant contributor of Chinese culture translation, study on solving the copyright problem of crowdsourcing translation is essential and need more efforts to be put into.

5. METHOD SUMMARY

This paper conducts the study in the way of descriptive discussion combining inquiring the historical literature.

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