On Terminology Consistency in English Translations of Zhuangyi Texts

Genggeng Tan[1], Gang Fang[2*]

[1]School of Interpreting & Translation Studies, Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, Guangzhou 510420, Guangdong Province, China

[2]School of Zhuang Medicine, Guangxi University of Chinese Medicine, Nanning 530200, Guangxi Province, China

Abstract: Terminology consistency is important in scientific translation including Zhuangyi translation. However, terminology inconsistency frequently occurs in the translation of Zhuangyi texts. In this article, terminology inconsistency in translations of Zhuangyi texts and its underlying causes are analyzed, assurance of terminology consistency aided by computer is discussed, and term consistency in Zhuangyi ballads is explored.

Keywords: Zhuangyi translation; Terminology consistency; Computer-aided translation; Zhuangyi ballads

1 Introduction

In recent years, Zhuang medicine has been making rapid development. The research and application of Zhuang medicine has progressed, as an increasing number of works on Zhuang medicine have been published, and Guangxi International Zhuang Medicine Hospital has been founded in Nanning, Guangxi. In the field of Zhuangyi translation, a tentative Chinese-English glossary for Zhuangyi terminologies was compiled in 2016[1]. Also in 2016, Meng Jieqiong and other researchers discussed the translation of Zhuangyi terminology and concluded that achievements in traditional Chinese medicine translation, such as translation principles and methods, should be leveraged to help the development of unified standards in the translation of Zhuangyi terminology and to avoid earlier problems which arose in the terminology translation of traditional Chinese medicine[2]. In 2017, Meng Jieqiong and other researchers applied *International Standard Chinese-English Basic Nomenclature of Chinese Medicine* in studying the translation of diagnostic terms of Zhuang medicine[3]. In 2019, computer-aided translation (CAT) in Zhuangyi translation was discussed, and it was accepted that consistency of terms and style in Zhuangyi translation can be assured with the help of terminology module and translation memory database in CAT software[4]. Terminology plays an important role in scientific translation including Zhuangyi translation, therefore large international organizations set up their own terminology databases, CAT applications include terminology modules as essential functions, and China National Committee for Terms in Sciences in Technologies has established the website "termonline.cn" as a terminology knowledge service platform. A great deal of work has been carried out on terminology in traditional Chinese medicine, in the form of extensive articles on terminology, books on

terms, international standards of Chinese-English terms and so on. In a smaller number of studies on Zhuangyi translation, terminology translation has become an important part of the discussion, but terminology inconsistency remains a significant problem in Zhuangyi translation. In this article, terminology inconsistency in translations of Zhuangyi texts is discussed and corresponding underlying causes are analyzed. The use of computers to identify problems in terminology inconsistency in an effective way, and to assure terminology consistency is explored. Also, transformed terms in Zhuang ballads as a special form of Zhuangyi texts are discussed.

2 Terminology inconsistency in translations of Zhuangyi texts, and its underlying causes

It is worth noting that problems of terminology consistency occur in several of the few studies on English translations of Zhuangyi texts. Various causes contribute to terminology inconsistency. Mistranslation is one of the causes. For example, in a short translation of research title and abstract, " 毒病 " is translated variously as "virus disease", "viral diseases" and "sepsis", and none of them are correct translations of " 毒病 "[5].

Difference in standards, strategies and methods applied by different translators is also a significant cause of terminology inconsistency. In different studies of Zhuangyi translation, " 谷道 " is translated as "Gu Channel" and "food passage", and " 水道 " is translated as "Shui Channel" and "water passage" [1, 6].When a Zhuangyi text is translated by multiple translators, it is hard to achieve terminology consistency without agreement on translation standards, strategies and methods and consistent application of these agreed translations of each term. The same translators might also apply different translation strategies. In two studies on Zhuangyi translation conducted by researchers, some of whom take part in both studies, " 谷道 " and " 水道 " are translated as "food passage" and "water passage" in the earlier study and into "Gu Channel" and "Shui Channel" in later study[6, 7].

Another contributing cause of terminology inconsistency is the provision of multiple translations for one term combined with arbitrary selection of term translations in the same translation task. In the translation of *Characteristic Zhuang Medicine Therapies*, the translator provides various translations for the term " 毒 ", including "toxin, poison, noxious substance, and noxious agents"[8]. Considering the monosemy of terms and the expression of only a single concept in one term, a concept should have only one corresponding translation of the one term[9]. The translator randomly applies different translations of " 毒 " in the English translation of the book while the concept of the term " 毒 " does not change in these different contexts. It is better to apply one translation to the corresponding term, as only in this way can the translation of the term survive over time and be accepted and used by both the scientific community and the popular community[9].

Also, arbitrary selection of term translations in the same translation task indicates lack of translation strategies. When translating Zhuangyi texts, translators may change their translation strategies for specific terms. Multiple reasons contribute to that, including deeper understanding of the terms and texts, requirements for better combination of term translations and other components, new sources of term translations, and consistency of translation strategies with other similar terms. With the improvement of terminology management, most changes in term translations can be made in advance for better terminology consistency.

3 Assurance of terminology consistency aided by computer

3.1 Terminology management

CAT can help improve terminology consistency, as terminology management tools or modules are provided in many CAT software or platforms. Nowadays, basically most of these CAT programs and platforms can help translators complete the majority of translation tasks including terminology management, but they vary in ease of use and availability. CAT software requires additional software resources, and they are too professional to apply in translation activities for translators who major in traditional medicine and receive no training in CAT software. Such software usually provides comprehensive functions to assist translation. When translators try to use them for the first time, they might be confused faced with too many functions and options even if they try to learn by means of manuals or tuition videos. As a result, translators cannot commence translation immediately. CAT software has system requirements, and changes in the computer system might lead to runtime issues. In addition, although this software might provide free

trial initially, typically they are not free of charge after a specified period. For translators with only a few translation tasks, it might be a high cost and low time efficiency to purchase and learn and use such software. Some online CAT platforms can help translators to complete translation tasks and manage terms with high efficiency. In China, Power Echo and Yicat are two online CAT platforms, and translators can easily use the free functions provided by these platforms to guarantee terminology consistency.

Regardless of whether translators use online CAT software or those requiring installation, all of them have similar terminology modules. In Zhuangyi translation, translators create a term in the terminology module of the selected CAT software by inputting a term and corresponding translation. When translators turn to any sentence or segment containing a certain term that exists in the terminology module, the term will be marked in the window of original text and displayed in the window of the terminology module. For consistency of the term throughout the entire text, translators just need to focus on the special marks in the original text and term translation in the terminology module window.

In Zhuangyi translation, CAT software can assure consistency in the translation of the same term, and in the translation strategies for various long or short terms. For instance, when a translator translates the phrase "万病从痧起" (many diseases come from sha)" and inputs "痧" and the determined transliteration "sha" into the terminology module, then he can see "痧 (sha)" in the display window of the terminology module if current segment for translation contains longer sha-related terms including "刮痧" and "痧证". He can apply the transliteration "sha" to all relevant terms and determine translations in the same translation strategies, such as "Gua Sha (scraping sha-bruises)" for "刮痧" and "sha diseases" for "痧证". Also, the translators can provide multiple translations for "痧" in the terminology module (not in the translation text), such as "sha" and "sha disease" to remind them that different translations might be needed for "痧" in different contexts and longer terms containing "痧".

When translators decide to change the translation of a particular term, the previous translation applied should be also changed to assure consistency. It is time-consuming and inaccurate to make these changes by reading all the translated parts to locate the term and its translation. Translators can use the global "search" function of Office or CAT software to locate terms

and make modifications in term translations. Some CAT applications provide "quality assurance (QA)" functionality to check terminology consistency. After modifying the previous translation of a specific term in the terminology module, translators can apply the "quality assurance" function (with "terminology" option selected) to discover unmodified translation of the term in the translation text. After modifications are completed, translators can search previous translations in the translation text to further confirm that no expected translation modification is omitted. It is worth mentioning that failure to update modified translation of terms in the terminology module might lead to term inconsistency when translators continue to translate the text.

3.2 Terminology acquisition

Problems of terminology inconsistency occur in words repeated more than once. If translators search and translate all terms in advance, then consistency can be assured for the same term and in the translation strategies for similar terms and terms of the same kind. In order to do that, terms should be extracted using term extraction functions in CAT software or other software and platforms, such as Sketch Engine. Translators can extract terms from the original texts in Sketch Engine. A free 30-day trial can be obtained after signing up at https://app.sketchengine.eu/. During the free trial, there are account and functionality limitations such as size of the storage space, but it is basically enough for processing terms in the original texts.

In Sketch Engine, translators can create new corpora using their original Zhuangyi texts. It is very convenient and fast to build a new corpus. According to the description of Sketch Engine, a new corpus containing about 100,000 words can be built in a few seconds, and one that contains around 10,000,000 words can be built in a minute or two. After the corpus is compiled and ready to use, translators can analyze keywords and terms in the corpus made from their own Zhuangyi texts. After exporting the lists of keywords and terms, a translator can see the frequency of different words including terms in the original text. Terms that occur more than once should be considered for translation in advance to guarantee the consistency of their translation. Contexts of each of one particular term should not be ignored as different translations might be needed in certain different contexts. For example, transliteration for a Zhuangyi term might be needed

in the translation of a prescription name while free translation is more appropriate in other contexts. The contexts of a term in different locations can be shown using the function of concordance (focus corpus) in Sketch Engine. It is worth noting that some terms that occur only once should also be translated in advance in order to guarantee the consistency of translation strategy. In the lists of keywords and terms, longer terms containing the same shorter terms or the same Chinese characters are revealed, with some of them occurring once only. However, all of them might need to be processed and translated in advance in order to realize the same or similar translation strategies for similar terms.

When translators translate Zhuangyi terms, translation results from machine translation tools should not be applied or considered, as Zhuangyi terms are too professional, or specialized, and these machine translation results are both far from accurate and tend to be misleading. Translators can look up professional websites such as www.termonline.cn and reference books on the translation of traditional Chinese medicine such as *WHO International Standard Terminologies on Traditional Medicine in the Western Pacific Region* and *International Standard Chinese-English Basic Nomenclature of Chinese Medicine*. There are many shared and similar terms in traditional Chinese medicine and Zhuang medicine, but the translators still need to evaluate and modify provided translations according to the accurate meanings and contexts of Zhuangyi terms.

Translators can manage bilingual terms using Microsoft Excel, but the original terms and corresponding translations should be input into the terminology module of CAT tools that are used for translating the complete original texts. Therefore, each term and its corresponding translations will be revealed during the translation activities whenever the term occurs in the original texts. As mentioned above, translators can also use the "terminology" function in "quality assurance" in CAT tools to check the consistency between term translation and the term list input into the terminology module of CAT tools.

However, due to the lack of word delimiters in Chinese text, Chinese text segmentation is more difficult than English text segmentation[10]. So some terms might be omitted by terminology processing tools, such as one-syllable terms. Translators still need to pay attention to some terms that are not marked in the terminology module of CAT tools after terminology processing.

4 Term consistency in Zhuangyi ballads

Zhuang people excel at summarizing medical experience as medical ballads. Most medical terms in Zhuang ballads are used in the same way as in other Zhuangyi texts, but frequent use of rhetorical devices results in term transformation, making them more difficult to process, translate and maintain consistency.

Example (1):

肺热玉叶鱼腥草，白点称加一点红；肺寒生姜兰香草，光棍草同冰糖蒸 [11]。

In example (1), " 肺 热 (lung heat)" and " 肺 寒 (lung cold)" in the Zhuang ballad are used in the same way as in other Zhuangyi texts, so too are most plant names. But the name of the herb " 玉叶 (Yuye)" is shortened as the sentences use the figure of speech "Dui'ou", in which better expression can be achieved if corresponding clauses are the same in structure and number of words. The original form of the shortened term " 玉叶 (Yuye)" is " 玉 叶 金 花 (Yuyejinhua)". Shortened terms are relatively common in Zhuangyi ballads to meet the rhythmic, structural and other requirements of figures of speech in the clauses or sentences in which these terms occur. For instance, " 血 见 愁 (Xuejianchou)" is shortened as " 血 见 (Xuejian)" and " 黑 墨 草 (Heimocao)" as " 墨草 (Mocao)" in "咯血棕榈加墨草，不出林来血见从 ", and " 黑墨草 (Heimocao)" is also shortened as " 墨草 (Mocao)" in " 尿血不少鼠曲草，茅 根 墨 草 小 便 通 "[11]. These shortened terms require explanatory notes to be clearly understood. As these terms are transformed in ballads, computer applications mentioned in Section 3.2 for term acquisition will probably fail to extract them and associate them with corresponding complete forms in other contexts, and they will, as well, not be shown in the term module of CAT software if translators only enter results of automatic term extraction into the terminology module. Special attention is required to assure the consistency of these terms.

Example (2):

泻痢还得土牛膝，番桃糯米共煮溶 [11]。

Without explanation, some shortened forms of medical terms might be particularly misleading in ballads. For instance, " 番桃 (Fantao)" is the shortened form of " 番 桃 叶 (Fantaoye)" in example (2), and it maintains the same number of Chinese characters in the two clauses; the complete form of term " 番 桃 叶 (Fantaoye)" refers to the leaves of the herb while " 番

桃 (Fantao)" indicates the herb itself or the fruit of the herb. Potential misuse of different parts of a herb might lead to terminology inconsistency and consequent undesired inefficacy of herbal medication, and for some types of herbs this is particularly true. For example, the medicinal ingredients of Puhuang (Typha angustifolia) are found mainly in pollen and it should be the extracted raw material of pollen rather than be used directly[12]. Great difference in the contents of chemical components is shown in the various medicinal parts of Daji (Cirsium japonicum)[13]. Extra attention needs to be paid if translators decide to input such shortened terms in the terminology module as these shortened terms and the corresponding complete terms can have different literal meanings. Conspicuous notes for such shortened terms should be added in the terminology module to avoid potential misunderstanding.

Example (3):

以黄治黄黄见黄，黄根黄栀配黄藤；田基黄加无根藤，黄疸肝热去无影。以红治红红见红，红药红藤月月红；红凉伞配红吹风，妇人血虚用就灵 [11]。

In Zhuangyi ballads, some terms are even shortened as single character words for the purpose of rhetorical devices. In example (3), the single character words "黄" (yellow) and "红" (red) are shortened to form the figure of speech "Dui'ou" in the two similar clauses "以黄治黄黄见黄" and "以红治红红见红". In the two similar clauses, repeated monosyllabic words for color represent those herbs, disease names, pathogenesis and other terms containing the single Chinese character meaning a certain color. For example, "黄" is used variously to represent the illness "黄疸 (jaundice)", and different herbs including "黄根 (Huanggen)", "黄栀 (Huangzhi)", "黄藤 (Huangteng)" and "田基黄 (Tianjihuang)".

CAT software should be used carefully to assure the consistency of translation of single character terms. As mentioned in Section 3, although single character terms can not be extracted by terminology processing tools, it is not recommended to manually enter them into the terminology module of CAT software. One-syllable terms, particularly shortened ones, appear frequently in the complete contexts as ordinary words or part of other terms. Therefore, manual input of one-syllable terms into the terminology module, without checking frequency and contextual relevance, will lead to frequent and invalid display. This will decrease translators' confidence in what is displayed by the terminology module, and increase the risk of terminology inconsistency.

5 Conclusion

In Zhuangyi translation, translators should leverage CAT tools and terminology processing tools to guarantee the consistency of Zhuangyi translations, including the consistency in translation of the same terms and in the translation strategies of related terms. Special attention should be paid to terminology translation in Zhuangyi ballads. In Zhuang medicine, more work on Zhuangyi terminology will be carried out to ensure the continuing development of Zhuang medicine. Now in the early stages of work on Zhuangyi terminology, terminology consistency should be highlighted and assured in translation of Zhuangyi texts, as there are few dedicated resources for terminology translation of Zhuang medicine.

References

[1] Cen SY. Primary Research on Standardization for English Translation on Zhuangyi Terminologies[D]. Guangxi University of Chinese Medicine, 2016.

[2] Meng JQ, Song N, Qin ZJ, et al. Problems and Advices on the Normalization of Term Translation in Zhuang Medicine[J]. Chinese Journal of Ethnomedicine and Ethnopharmacy, 2016, 25(24): 11-13, 17.

[3] Meng JQ, Song N, Xie HT. ISNTCM-based Translation Strategy for Diagnostic Terms of Zhuang Medicine[J]. Chinese Journal of Basic Medicine in Traditional Chinese Medicine, 2017, 23(7): 1017-1019.

[4] Meng JQ, Zhou F, Song N. Study of English Translation Strategies for Zhuang Medicine Based on Machine Translation Technologies[J]. China Journal of Multimedia & Network Teaching, 2019(3): 21-22.

[5] Hong ZG, Deng XL. On "Virus Disease" in Zhuang Medicine[J]. Journal of South-Central University for Nationalities (Natural Science Edition), 2012, 31(3): 38.

[6] Meng JQ, Qin ZJ, Song N, et al. Discussion on English Translation Methods for Acupoints in Zhuang Medicine[J]. Journal of Guangxi University of Chinese Medicine, 2016, 19(4): 112.

[7] Meng JQ, Song N, Zhou F, et al. Barriers and Countermeasures for English Translation of Zhuangyi Terminology[J]. Chinese Journal of Ethnomedicine and Ethnopharmacy, 2018, 27(17): 13.

[8] Huang HQ. A Project Report on the Translation of Characteristic Zhuang Medicine Therapies[D]. Guangxi University, 2018, 37.

[9] Dai WP. On Term Translation in Linguitic Works: Issues and Strategies[J]. Language and Translation, 2011(02):41, 46.

[10] Yang CC, Li KW. Segmenting Chinese Unknown Words by Heuristic Method[C]. In: Sembok TMT, Zaman HB, Chen H, Urs SR, Myaeng SH. (eds) Digital Libraries: Technology and Management of Indigenous Knowledge for Global Access.

ICADL 2003. Lecture Notes in Computer Science. Springer, Berlin, Heidelberg: 2003, 2911: 510.

[11] Lan RC, Fan LY. Three Zhuangyi Ballads[J]. Journal of Medicine & Pharmacy of Chinese Minorities, 2012, 18(2): 30.

[12] Yan H, Wei F, Ma SC. Comparison of Medicinal Part Quality of Typha angustifolia[J]. China Pharmacy, 2020, 31(7): 805-810.

[13] Xie MY, Zhang Z, Huang Y, et al. Study on HPLC Characteristic Chromatogram and Chemical Pattern Recognition of Different Medicinal Parts of Cirsium japonicum[J]. China Pharmacy, 2020, 31(7): 820-825.