

Study on the Translation and International Communication of Chongqing Local Proverbs and Sayings

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Abstract: This paper aims to explore the translation of Chongqing local proverbs and sayings based on the theories of domestication and foreignization, and their international communication through different modes of communication, with the goal of sharing their inherent wisdom of Chongqing local people with people around the world.

Keywords: Translation; Chongqing local proverbs and sayings; International communication; Different modes of communication

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1. Introduction

Chongqing local proverbs and sayings are local dialects created and disseminated by Chongqing's local people from generation to generation. They are concise, vivid, and full of rich wisdom and life philosophy, mostly originating from the hands of the working people. They not only reflect people's life experiences and aspirations but also make communication more convenient and enjoyable. For example, "Everyone is different, as the flowers have different shades of red." This proverb conveys the idea that just as flowers come in various types of red, each person is unique and has their own individual characteristics. It emphasizes the diversity and individuality of people, highlighting the beauty and richness that comes from the differences among individuals. However, seldom do researchers pay attention to the value of Chongqing's local proverbs and sayings, as well as their translation and international communication. Therefore, this paper will explore the translation of Chongqing local proverbs and sayings using various translation theories, and examine their modes of international communication, aiming to introduce the wisdom of Chongqing local proverbs and sayings to a global audience.

2. Translation of Chongqing local proverbs and sayings

The translation of Chongqing local proverbs and sayings is quite challenging, mainly due to the fact that these

expressions often incorporate regional culture, historical background, and colloquial habits, possessing unique regional and cultural connotations ^[1]. In the process of translation, accurately conveying both the literal meaning and the underlying significance of these proverbs while preserving their original flavor and style presents a difficult job for translators because it requires translators not only possess solid language skills but also a deep understanding of Chongqing's history, culture, colloquial habits, and the cultural background of the target language, as well as the application of appropriate translation techniques and strategies to preserve the original flavor and style of the proverbs as much as possible, facilitating effective cross-cultural communication.

2.1. Domestication and foreignization

The commonly used translation theories in local proverbs and sayings translation mainly include the following: "Relevance Theory" ^[2], "Theory of Functional Equivalence" ^[3], and "Theory of Language Function" ^[4]. Regardless of what translation theories were applied in the translation of local proverbs and sayings, domestication and foreignization are two commonly used methods in translation ^[5]. Domestication emphasizes the target language culture as the destination, making the translation more in line with the language habits and cultural background of the target language readers. Foreignization, on the other hand, emphasizes retaining the characteristics of the source language culture and showcasing the features of the source language culture as much as possible.

In the context of translating Chongqing local proverbs and sayings, the flexible application of these two translation methods is particularly significant. By judiciously employing domestication and foreignization, translators can effectively balance the need for clarity and accessibility for the target language readers while preserving the distinctive characteristics of the Chongqing local proverbs and sayings. In essence, the strategic application of domestication and foreignization in the translation of Chongqing local proverbs and sayings serves to facilitate cross-cultural communication by making the content more comprehensible to the target audience while honoring the cultural heritage and linguistic identity inherent in the source material. This balanced approach enables the effective transmission of the wisdom, traditions, and cultural significance encapsulated in the local proverbs and sayings, contributing to the broader understanding and appreciation of the Chongqing dialect and its cultural heritage.

2.2. Application of domestication and foreignization in Chongqing local proverbs and sayings

Chongqing local proverbs and sayings are a unique linguistic and cultural phenomenon in the Chongqing region, reflecting the wisdom and humor of the local people as well as the local customs and social life ^[6]. These proverbs and sayings are not only rich in philosophy but also full of enlightenment, which are the heritage of the Chongqing people, and worthy of being introduced to the outside world. Take the following proverbs and sayings as examples:

"Stealing oil when young, and stealing cows when grown." ^[7]

Foreignization is adopted in the translation of this proverb and saying, where the proverb is translated literally. This proverb conveys the same meaning as the English proverb "He who will steal an egg will steal an ox", indicating that a person who steals small things when young is likely to steal big things as they grow up. Because the life experiences of people around the world have similarities in many aspects, such as food, shelter, education, birth, and death. This similarity stems from the common basic needs, emotions, and universal challenges faced by humanity. Hence, even a literal translation can be easily understood by foreigners. Foreignization can be applied in translating such proverbs that reflect similar life experiences. Another example is "Singing water is not boiling; boiling water is not singing." This proverb means that a truly capable person does not need to show off, while someone who is showing off their abilities may not possess them.

Foreignization of certain Chongqing local proverbs and sayings may at times confuse readers from other cultures. Consider the following proverb and saying as an example:

Version 1: “People do not deceive the earth, and the earth does not deceive people.”^[8]

Version 2: “As you sow, so shall you reap.”

This proverb originally means when we approach the land with honesty and diligence, like farmers working hard and eagerly awaiting a bountiful harvest, our efforts and dedication will be rewarded by the land. The first version is a literal translation, which may seem a little awkward: “How people deceive the earth and earth deceives people.” Therefore, the second version applies domestication to ensure that foreign readers can easily understand the meaning of the proverb and saying which emphasizes the concept of receiving outcomes that are in line with one’s own actions and choices.

In the translation of Chongqing local proverbs and sayings, a balance between domestication and foreignization is often sought to ensure their understandability. For example:

Version 1: “Learn from good people to become good; learn from witches to learn the spirit possession ritual.”^[9]

Version 2: “Who learns from good people to become good; who keeps company with the wolf will learn to howl.”

This proverb emphasizes the influence of one’s companions on their behavior and character. It suggests that associating with virtuous individuals can lead to positive personal development while associating with negative influences can lead to adopting their traits. The first version is a literal translation, where the first part of the proverb is easily understood, but the latter part may confuse foreign readers because the concepts of a witch in Western culture and Chinese culture are different. In Chinese culture, witches are typically associated with evil, while in Western culture, the concept of a witch can encompass both positive and negative traits. Therefore foreignization is used in the first part, and domestication is used in the latter part of version 2 to avoid misunderstanding. A similar translation technique is used in the following proverb and saying:

Version 1: “Look at the weather when you step out; look at men’s faces when you step in.”^[10]

Version 2: “Look at the weather when you step out; look at men’s attitude when you step in.”

This proverb and saying is full of life wisdom. It tells us that when we go out, we should observe the weather so that we can make the necessary preparations. When entering a new environment or interacting with people, we should pay attention to the other person’s emotions and attitudes to better adapt and communicate. Version 1 is a literal translation, while in the second version, “attitude” replaces “faces”, which is more understandable for English readers.

When translating Chongqing’s local proverbs and sayings, it’s important to provide accurate translations that convey the intended meaning effectively. Therefore, in practical application, the combination of domestication and foreignization translation methods can better convey Chongqing’s local proverbs and sayings, achieving effective cross-cultural communication dissemination.

3. International communication of Chongqing local proverbs and sayings

Chongqing local proverbs and sayings, as important components of Chongqing’s local culture, are indeed worth cherishing and spreading abroad^[11]. They are not only the essence of the Chongqing dialect but also the crystallization of local people’s wisdom, containing rich historical, cultural, and social information. By spreading these language forms rich in wisdom and cultural connotations, we can enable more people around the world to understand our local culture, enhancing mutual understanding and respect.

3.1. Improving translation quality

Ensuring high-quality translation is paramount for effectively conveying Chongqing local proverbs and sayings to an international audience. It's essential to recognize that translation is not simply a mechanical conversion between two languages; rather, it is a complex cross-cultural information transmission activity. Therefore, skilled translators with a deep understanding of both the source and target languages, as well as the cultural intricacies associated with the proverbs and sayings, are crucial. Additionally, considering the cultural, social, and historical background of the target audience is essential in ensuring that the translated expressions effectively communicate the essence and wisdom encapsulated in Chongqing's local proverbs and sayings.

First and foremost, cultivating translators' awareness of cultural diversity is essential when it comes to the translation of Chongqing local proverbs and sayings. This task is intrinsically centered around cross-cultural information transmission, and the quality of translation hinges on the translator's ability to fully comprehend and extract information from the original language, encompassing both explicit and implicit content, and convey it as accurately and comprehensively as possible in the target language ^[12]. Achieving this level of accuracy and depth requires continuous improvement of translators' awareness of the diversity inherent in both cultures. This involves not only linguistic proficiency but also a profound understanding of the historical, social, and cultural contexts that have shaped the proverbs and sayings. By honing their awareness of cultural nuances, translators can effectively capture the essence and cultural significance of these expressions, ensuring that the richness and wisdom they encapsulate are faithfully conveyed to the target audience. Additionally, developing a sensitivity to the cultural intricacies embedded within the proverbs and sayings enables translators to navigate the complexities of language and meaning, ultimately facilitating the successful transmission of Chongqing's local cultural heritage to a global audience.

Secondly, enhancing the practical abilities of translators. Translators must not only accurately translate the words and phrases from one language to another, but also capture the cultural connotations, idiomatic expressions, and subtle nuances that may be embedded in the original text ^[13]. This requires a deep understanding of both the source and target languages, as well as the cultural contexts in which they are embedded. Therefore, translators should immerse themselves in real-world translation tasks, allowing them to apply their knowledge and skills in authentic contexts. By engaging in such tasks, translators can gain valuable experience and refine their abilities to effectively convey the intricacies of language and culture, which will equip them to produce high-quality, culturally sensitive translations that resonate with the target audience and accurately convey the intended meaning of the original text. Ultimately, enhancing the practical skills and abilities of translators can contribute to the global exchange of ideas and knowledge through effective language translation.

3.2. Multi-modes of international communication

The international communication of Chongqing local proverbs and sayings encompasses a diverse array of methods, all of which play an important role in the extensive propagation and exchange of Chongqing local culture on a global level. These modes of communication, which include cultural exchange programs, media, and online platforms, as well as tourism, serve as vital conduits for sharing the rich cultural heritage and linguistic traditions of Chongqing with the world.

First cultural exchange programs, such as festivals, exhibitions, and performances, play a pivotal role in showcasing the richness of Chongqing's cultural heritage and providing international audiences with insights into the unique proverbs and sayings of the region. Take Chongqing's local opera, known for its distinct style and regional characteristics as an example. Through cultural exchange programs, performances of Chongqing local opera can be presented to international audiences, offering them a firsthand experience of Chongqing's proverbs and sayings, as they are often integrated into the opera's lyrics and dialogues. By witnessing these

performances, audiences from diverse cultural backgrounds can gain a deeper understanding of the cultural connotations and linguistic nuances embedded within Chongqing's proverbs and sayings.

Secondly, the Internet and online media platforms have emerged as powerful tools for the dissemination of Chongqing's local proverbs and sayings, offering extensive reach and accessibility to individuals worldwide. Platforms such as TikTok, RED, and various social media channels have become instrumental in promoting cross-cultural exchange and appreciation of Chongqing's cultural heritage, allowing global audiences to gain insight into the rich cultural connotations and wisdom encapsulated in the region's local proverbs and sayings. One notable example of the impactful dissemination of Chongqing's local proverbs and sayings is exemplified through the influential presence of Internet celebrities, such as Ma Dahan who has insisted on speaking Chongqing dialect in his videos, offering global audiences the opportunity to immerse themselves in the region's linguistic richness and cultural heritage. These individuals utilize their online platforms and social media channels to showcase and promote Chongqing's dialectal culture, including the sharing of local proverbs and sayings. Through engaging videos and content, these Internet personalities play a significant role in raising awareness and appreciation of Chongqing's linguistic and cultural traditions on a global scale.

Lastly, tourism serves as a powerful and impactful means of promoting Chongqing's local proverbs and sayings, offering foreign visitors the opportunity to engage with the region's cultural and linguistic heritage, and fostering cross-cultural understanding and appreciation. With the rapid development of China's tourism industry, an increasing number of foreign tourists are drawn to Chongqing, not only to witness its natural beauty and modern urban landscape but also to immerse themselves in the region's rich cultural traditions. As these visitors explore Chongqing's cultural and tourism offerings, the integration of local proverbs and sayings into their experiences becomes instrumental in deepening their understanding of the region's history, customs, and traditions, thereby facilitating greater cross-cultural appreciation and connection. For example, cultural and tourism products are unique windows to propagate the region's cultural and linguistic heritage. Whether through guided tours, cultural performances, or souvenirs, the incorporation of local proverbs and sayings into these tourism offerings enriches the visitors' understanding of Chongqing's cultural identity, offering insights into the wisdom, traditions, and values embedded in the region's linguistic expressions.

In summary, the international dissemination of Chinese proverbs and sayings encompasses various aspects such as education, cultural exchange, media and the internet, and tourism. These modes complement and promote each other, collectively propelling the dissemination and development of Chinese culture on a global scale^[14]. The paths of Chongqing local proverbs and sayings' dissemination are diverse, covering multiple areas such as culture, media, and tourism. These paths are intertwined and mutually reinforcing, collectively driving the dissemination of the local culture on a global scale^[15].

4. Conclusion

Chongqing proverbs and sayings are not only treasures of the Chongqing dialect and local culture but also the crystallization of wisdom in local people's daily lives. They often contain abundant experience and wisdom, helping people find the right direction and methods when facing problems and challenges. Whether in trivial matters or life choices, proverbs and sayings can offer beneficial insights and guidance, enabling people to deal with various situations more wisely. Translating Chongqing's local proverbs and sayings facilitates the sharing of Chongqing's unique cultural wisdom and traditions with a global audience, contributing to the richness and diversity of human language expression. Through these various modes of communication, the international dissemination of Chongqing local proverbs and sayings not only contributes to the global exchange of cultural knowledge but also fosters a deeper appreciation and understanding of Chongqing cultural heritage, promoting

cross-cultural dialogue and fostering a greater sense of global cultural interconnectedness.

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