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Study on the System Construction of International Publicity Translation of Shandong Intangible Cultural Heritage Under the Belt and Road Initiative

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Abstract

With the adoption of the national strategy of introducing excellent Chinese traditional culture to the world, all local municipal governments are engaged in the work of saving, protecting, and developing the intangible cultural heritage in their regions. Shandong province is rich in diverse kinds of cultural resources. In terms of protecting intangible cultural heritage, Shandong has made a lot of achievements, but as to the translation of the intangible cultural heritage in foreign languages, there is still a gap; For this reason, possible pathways are proposed through the study of the present situation of translation of the intangible cultural heritage in foreign languages to introduce the excellent Shandong culture to the world, which is of great strategic significance. It will not only help to enhance her soft power but also help to make a contribution to the nation's cultural strategy of strengthening the nation through culture.

Keywords

The Belt and Road Initiative; Shandong intangible cultural heritage; international publicity; system construction

1. The Current Situation of International Publicity of Shandong Intangible Cultural Heritage

Under the Belt and Road Initiative, external publicity texts serve as a primary medium for disseminating Chinese culture. External publicity translation can effectively advance the implementation of the national strategy of "going global" for Chinese culture, further enhance exchanges and cooperation with countries along the Belt and Road, and help shape a credible, lovable, and respectable image of China.

The land of Qilu (Shandong Province) is rich in cultural heritage and boasts a long history. Shandong is home not only to numerous nationally and provincially protected key cultural relics but also to a diverse array of intangible cultural heritage resources (Sun, 2024). Currently, the protection of intangible cultural heritage in Shandong has achieved remarkable results: a number of precious, endangered, and highly valuable intangible cultural heritage projects have been effectively rescued and preserved; the cataloging system and transmission mechanisms have been continuously improved; productive and holistic protection measures have been steadily advanced; and the development of infrastructure and databases for intangible cultural heritage has been consistently enhanced. A positive environment where the whole society participates in the protection of intangible cultural heritage is gradually taking shape. As of 2025, Shandong Province has surveyed over 1.1 million clues related to various types of intangible cultural

heritage. It is home to 8 projects recognized by UNESCO as "Representative Works of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity," 186 national-level listings, and 1,073 provincial-level listings, ranking second in China in terms of intangible cultural heritage quantity.

In the past years, Shandong tourism has witnessed rapid development. Nevertheless, it is far from satisfactory in terms of the international publicity translation of Shandong's intangible cultural heritage. Presently, studies on Shandong intangible cultural heritage are confined to the fields of resurrection, protective development, and inheritance, and digital protection of intangible cultural heritage, and also about the dimensions of transforming intangible cultural heritage into tourist products, and so forth. There are quite a few published materials on translation with regard to Shandong intangible cultural heritage. Apart from the intangible cultural heritage included in the list of state-level intangible cultural heritage list, such as Taishan Shigandang, which has a relatively complete English translation and English introduction of digital products, most Shandong intangible cultural heritage merely presents English markings of certain slogans. It is rather difficult to find relevant, complete, and systematic provincial published materials of international publicity translation. As a result, the current situation precisely demonstrates that the research on the international publicity of Shandong intangible cultural heritage still lies in its preliminary phase, and there is a long road ahead for the external publicity.

2. The Underlying Reasons Causing the Tardive Development of Shandong Intangible Cultural Heritage

2.1 Lack of Materials Concerning International Publicity of Shandong Intangible Cultural Heritage

Most intangible cultural heritage attaches great importance to the performance and exhibition of artistry. Thus, the introduction of written materials is in urgent need. The majority of the written materials are merely a simple enumeration of the intangible cultural heritage, devoid of elaborate written materials. Some intangible cultural heritages have no more than a brief introduction concerning the artistry, steps, etc. The fact of having no complete and systematic written materials undoubtedly brings about tremendous challenges and obstacles to the translators of intangible cultural heritages.

2.2 The Government and the Public's Insufficient Awareness of Tangible Cultural Heritage and the Government's Insufficient Investment

The People's Government of Shandong Province all long placed great emphasis on the protection, development, and publicity of intangible cultural heritage, and has done a lot of work in protecting intangible cultural heritage, which has achieved prominent results. However, there is much work to be done in the field of international publicity translation of intangible cultural heritage (He & Wang, 2019). For instance, many websites of the official municipal governments present no English translation versions. Meanwhile, the author didn't find the relevant websites of international publicity of Shandong's intangible cultural heritage. Despite the fact that there exist few translations concerning the intangible cultural heritage list, the information is quite inadequate, and its updating frequency is rather slow.

2.3 Devoid of Professional Talents in International Publicity Translation

The fact that the translation concerning intangible cultural heritage involves numerous vocabulary of culturally specific terms, and many cultural vocabulary, such as folk culture, demands that the translators of intangible cultural heritage have abundant cultural knowledge and solid foreign language competence. Nevertheless, for a lack of professional talents, the translation of intangible cultural heritage in some regions is vacant. Some translation versions are squarely put to the public without the modification of the translation scholars. Especially for the translation of dietary culture, it is made in a rough manner, which has given rise to great misunderstandings. And it will severely affect the seriousness of cultural transmission.

2.4 Lack of Intercultural Communication Awareness in International Publicity Translation of Intangible Cultural Heritage

Most translators lack intercultural awareness, who don't attach importance to the discrepancies between Chinese and Western cultures and languages. They generally translate the relevant publicity materials in a mechanical manner and confine themselves to Chinese thinking patterns. Consequently, the implied message of intangible cultural heritage

is not externalized to the surface of the target language after digestion and understanding. Accordingly, the historical value and cultural connotation of intangible cultural heritage can not be exhibited, even sometimes the wrong transmission of information will appear.

3. The Construction of International Publicity Translation of Shandong Intangible Cultural Heritage

3.1 The Subject of Implementation of the International Publicity Translation

A study on the subject of implementation means to solve the question of who translates. Under the Belt and Road Initiative, the Shandong intangible cultural heritage external communication system requires a collaborative translation effort. The texts of intangible cultural heritage are endowed with excessively profound cultural connotations, the translation difficulties of which are self-evident. How to smoothly carry out translation work and guarantee the quality demands that the government can plan and coordinate at a higher level (Li & Gu, 2022). Meanwhile, a professional working group can be established, in which the relevant departments and scholars are capable of mapping out those authoritative Chinese versions of intangible cultural heritage, leveraging the iconic status of UNESCO-listed items like the Zhoucun Shaobing Making Technique (the art of making Zhoucun sesame cakes) to enhance Shandong's cultural influence. And then the intangible cultural heritage team, consisting of high-quality translating talents, can be organized, in which the relevant project work concerning international publicity translation should be encouraged. We should establish an effective link between translators and the protective units of the intangible cultural heritage and the inheritors, which can provide support and safeguard in terms of policy, capital, system, and so on (Brecht & Walton, 1993). Accordingly, cooperative mechanisms between protection agencies of intangible cultural heritage in other provinces and cities, and the teams of intangible cultural heritage should be built.

3.2 Methods and Strategies of International Publicity Translation

The translation team should learn and summarize the already existing texts of intangible cultural heritage, comprehensively discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the methods, and formulate the comparatively uniform translation standards (Liu, 2020). The translators can firstly reach consensus in terms of adopting foreignization and domestication, and then they can flexibly take advantage of various translating methods, such as addition, abridgement, adjustment, conversion, etc. The goal is to retain Chinese traditional cultural characteristics at first, and make the translated texts effectively conveyed in foreign texts. For instance, when mentioning the projects with typical cultural characteristics, a translator should at first guarantee the precise understanding of meta-language. Then, the method of adopting transliteration plus interpretation can be utilized, along with the arrangement of adding relevant pictures for further explanation, so as to make the materials understandable and make the foreign readers get the main ideas. For instance, "Shandong Bangzi" opera skillfully blends authenticity and accessibility. The name itself is transliterated to protect its cultural identity, while key elements are adapted: its iconic high-pitched singing style can be described as "the powerful vocals of Shandong Bangzi" for immediate understanding. This approach transforms a local art form into a resonant cultural narrative along the Belt and Road. By means of such additional explanation, the form and meaning can be transmitted effectively, and the goal of international publicity translation can be realized.

3.3 Technological Means of International Publicity Translation

A translator should make full use of internet technology, especially the relevant tools of corpus translation, and implement them in terms of overall design and concrete operation, so as to carry forward the construction of bilingual corpora of Shandong intangible cultural heritage and provide better service for the translation of intangible cultural heritage. The application of corpus can be represented in the following two aspects. Firstly, search and collect the materials, including: putting the Chinese and English electronic editions and hard copies that are related to Chinese culture into the corpus. The purpose is to conduct text alignment and terminology extraction, which will provide a reference for the materials of intangible cultural heritage. Secondly, the establishment of multi-lingual corpora of intangible cultural heritage can be utilized in the fields of translation, terminology unification, retrieval and inquiry, language analysis, etc., which can greatly enhance the efficiency and accuracy of translation (Qin, 2015). In the era of AI, advancing the capacity of utilizing diversified technological devices and means should be an integral component of a translator, such as NMT (Neural Machine Translation), LLMs (Large Language Models), CAT (Computer-

aided Translation), and Multimedia translation. For Taishan Stone Worship, AI-powered platforms offer personalized virtual tours, explaining the custom's history in multiple languages. These tools transform static heritage into immersive, accessible experiences, fostering deeper global understanding and people-to-people bonds along the Belt and Road. This will necessarily exert far-reaching influence in promoting global communication and the cultural soft power of Shandong intangible cultural heritage.

3.4 Transmission Media of International Publicity Translation

The successful translation of intangible cultural heritage ultimately depends on its effective transmission in the translated version. Under the Belt and Road Initiative, diversified publicity media should be comprehensively utilized for the international publicity of Shandong's intangible cultural heritage. Firstly, in the network era, the publicity force of websites should be placed under much stress, and the English translation of network resources of intangible culture websites should be reinforced as well. Professional teams can conduct the tasks of design and maintenance of web pages, so as to effectively integrate and display the relevant texts, pictures, and video resources, thus making it a window open to the world to disseminate intangible culture. Secondly, carry out multi-channel cooperation with the news transmission agencies such as TV, newspapers, and so forth. The special columns or sections can be established to conduct feature reports and promotion of cultural heritage. Thirdly, Shandong's intangible cultural heritage and local tourism and culture can be thoroughly integrated. The global communication of intangible cultural heritage in local tourist sites, museums, digital preservation, etc., should be advanced (Yang, 2023). For instance, the Confucius Ceremony in Qufu is promoted through an integrated cultural tourism media strategy. Travel platforms feature immersive "Ritual Experience Tours" with 360-degree videos of the ceremony, while official websites provide bilingual booking for seasonal performances. This approach transforms static heritage into living experiences, driving cultural exchange through educational tourism along the Belt and Road. Last but not least, in the times of new media and convergence media, various new media methods can be applied accordingly.

3.5 Immersive Pathways for Shandong Intangible Cultural Heritage Experiences: From "Storyteller" to "Facilitator"

The core of this pathway is to transform the intangible cultural heritage into a perceptible, participatory, and immersive experience, which will bring a shift in the international public from passive information recipients to active cultural participants. By means of creating a genuine or virtual "cultural field", it is capable of triggering the emotive resonance, thus realizing the transcendence from "knowing" to "experiencing". Firstly, forging cultural landmarks and vibrant festivals. Establish high-level "Qilu Cultural Center", "Luban Workshop", "Banmo Institute", etc., in the key overseas cities, making them a regularly available experience space. Meanwhile, distinctly thematic cultural festivals can be meticulously conceived, such as "Weifang International Kite Festival, Shandong" and "Zibo International Ceramics Expo". These festival activities will naturally appeal to the global audiences, and they will steadily embrace Shandong intangible culture. Secondly, leveraging technology for immersive experiences. By utilizing VR/AR/MR technologies, develop the projects of "The Eight Immortals Crossing the Sea", "Lvju Opera VR Cosplay Experience", "Digital Production of Yangjiabu Woodblock New Year Prints", etc., which are capable of providing borderless access to the audience, stepping into the Legend of Liangshan Marsh or climbing Mount Tai in person. Through gamified storytelling, the popular plot DLCs entailed with Chinese philosophy and aesthetics can be created by cooperating with world-renowned video game companies. Accordingly, the players can gain an intuitive understanding of the quintessence of Shandong intangible cultural heritage through entertainment.

3.6 The Integration Pathway of Industrial Empowerment: From "Promotional Material" to "Consumable Product"

This pathway aims to leverage market mechanisms to enable the external promotion of Shandong intangible cultural heritage to become self-sustaining, allowing cultural influence to take root through the consumption of goods. Firstly, IP Licensing and creative derivative development-From "Static Display" to "Dynamic Trend" (Feng, 2023). This involves transforming Shandong intangible cultural heritage elements into IP symbols suitable for market consumption. For example, the natural textures of the Linyi Xugong Inkstone, the iconic "centipede with a dragon's head" shape of Weifang kites, and the cartoonish figures of Cao County Glutinous Rice Dough Figurines can be licensed to international designers or brands, accompanied by professional translations of their design concepts and cultural

stories, to develop derivative products like stationery, apparel, and trendy toys. This transforms ICH from "promotional material" in museums into "trendy consumer goods" pursued by younger generations. The accompanying bilingual brand stories become mobile media for external promotion. Secondly, Brand elevation and high-end customization from "Folk Craft" to "Life Aesthetics". This level focuses on integrating Shandong intangible cultural heritage with modern design and high-end manufacturing to enhance its added value. For instance, Zibo Colored Glass artistry could collaborate with internationally renowned lighting brands to create artistic lamps embodying Eastern aesthetics of light and shadow. The culinary culture of Zibo Barbecue could be elevated into a premium barbecue gift set, complete with recipes in English, Japanese, and Korean and specially formulated dipping sauces, positioning it as a high-end souvenir representing the "Taste of Shandong." This approach elevates Shandong intangible cultural heritage from simple folk crafts to a "life aesthetic" symbolizing quality and style, consequently expanding the target audience for its external promotion from cultural enthusiasts to elite consumer groups.

4. Conclusion

From the perspective of the Belt and Road Initiative, the significance of international publicity translation is becoming increasingly prominent. Shandong province should make every effort to advance the protection and development of intangible cultural heritage, combined with the local characteristics and advantages. Meanwhile, Shandong international publicity translation of intangible cultural heritage demands the joint cooperation and efforts of governments at all levels and translating talents. Only by doing this can Shandong's excellent intangible cultural heritage spread to the whole world, and contribute to the establishment of a powerful cultural country.

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