

Research on the English Translation of Culture-Bound Terms in Yi Dialect Oral Literature from the Perspective of Four-life Maxim

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Abstract: The accurate translation of culture-bound terms is vital for ensuring the faithful representation of ethnic minority oral literature. Analyzing the English translation of these terms can significantly promote minority cultures, offer a comprehensive view of China to the world, and enhance the narrative of Chinese stories. China's Eco-Translatology, rooted in Eastern ecological wisdom, provides a framework for translation in the new era, emphasizing Four-life Maxim. Guided by this theory, this paper examines the English translation of culture-bound terms in the Yi oral literature Meige, providing a reference for translating China's minority literature.

Keywords: Culture Related Terms; Eco-Translatology; Four-life Maxim Perspective; Translation Methods; English Translation of Minority Literature.

1. Introduction

The 20th National Congress report stresses the importance of enhancing the influence of Chinese civilization by shaping China's global narrative. The translation of minority literature plays a key role in spreading China's voice and building its image. The Yi epic Meige is a valuable cultural heritage that reflects the history, culture, and philosophy of the Yi people, rich with culture-bound terms that are essential for understanding their beliefs.

In the context of Western attempts to distort China's image, there is a growing call to strengthen cultural confidence and properly translate minority cultures. This paper, applying Four-life Maxim of Eco-Translatology, aims to balance linguistic and cultural ecology in translation, thereby promoting China's multi-ethnic unity and contributing to China's discourse on the global stage.

2. Eco-Translatology

2.1. Theoretical Overview

Eco-Translatology, as an emerging theory, is guided by neo-ecologism and explores the ecological rationale in translation activities. It advocates ecological thought as a worldview and methodology to guide translation behavior and research. As a research paradigm, it views translation from an ecological perspective.

A search for "Eco-Translatology" reveals a growing trend in articles and dissertations using this theory over the past two decades. Proposed by Chinese scholars, it is an original translation theory with both global and Chinese characteristics, offering a significant new research paradigm.

Hu Gengshen first constructed Eco-Translatology in 2001, introducing "natural ecology" into translation studies. This theory centers on the translator, adheres to the principle of "unity of heaven and man" and uses Darwin's "adaptation/selection" as its foundation. It emphasizes the three-dimensional conversion of language, culture, and communication, aiming to achieve ecological balance between source and target languages while promoting cultural

exchange. [1]

In 2013, Hu proposed the idea that "translation gives life" and later introduced the "Theory of Four-life Maxim": "Life Orientation""Life Acquisition""Life Conversion",and"Life Incarnation". "Life Orientation", "Life Acquisition", "Life Conversion" and "Life Incarnation" "Life Orientation" views the text as a living entity, while "Life Acquisition" refers to fully understanding the original work before translation. "Life Conversion" deals with expressing this understanding in the translated text, and "Life Incarnation" refers to the successful transplantation of the original into the translated work.

2.2. Research Status and Trends of Eco-Translatology's "Theory of Four-life Maxim"

Advanced searches in major databases using "Eco-Translatology" + "Theory of Four-life Maxim" or "Eco-Translatology" + "Four-life Maxim Concept" as keywords yield literature sources that are predominantly journal articles. Since the "Theory of Four-life Maxim" was a new proposition introduced by Professor Hu Gengshen in 2019, related research is still in its initial stages. The trend in the number of publications shows an upward trend from 2019 to 2022, with a slight decline in 2023. The research topics of the related literature can be broadly categorized into three main types: translation practice reports guided by the Four-life Maxim concept, translation studies, and theoretical research. Translation studies guided by this theory cover a variety of text types, such as subtitle translation, English translation of ancient poetry and prose, and the translation of culture-bound terms.

2.3. Applicable Text Types of Eco-Translatology Theory

The application of Eco-Translatology theory in the translation of minority literature demonstrates its broad applicability and effectiveness. Through a comprehensive analysis of the following literature, we can draw this conclusion:

(1) The book "Literary Translation Studies from the

Perspective of Eco-Translatology" explores the application of Eco-Translatology in literary translation, especially in dealing with translation issues in cross-cultural communication activities. The study emphasizes the relationship between translation and the ecological environment, as well as how to achieve cultural diversity and sustainable development through translation.

(2) The eco-translation study of the English translation of "Red Dust" indicates that the principles of "survival of the fittest" and "unity of heaven and man" emphasized by Eco-Translatology align with the ecological consciousness portrayed in the novel. This study analyzes the English translation of "Red Dust" through the three-dimensional transformation theory proposed by Eco-Translatology and explores the factors contributing to its success.

(3) In the study "English Translation of Minority Folk Literature from the Perspective of Eco-Translatology: A Case Study of 'Yantai Yingzi Historical Anecdotes'" the three-dimensional transformation theory of Eco-Translatology is applied to analyze the translation strategies of minority folk literature. The research indicates that the three-dimensional transformation theory of Eco-Translatology is of great importance in guiding the English translation of minority folk literature.

(4) In the study "Translation of Minority Epics from an Eco-Translational Perspective:

A Case Study of Dai Nai's English Translation of 'Ashima'" Eco-Translatology is applied to the translation research of minority epics. This study highlights the applicability and effectiveness of Eco-Translatology when dealing with texts that have profound cultural backgrounds and ethnic characteristics.

In conclusion, Eco-Translatology theory is applicable to the study of various types of minority literature translation, including novels, folk literature, and epics. These research cases demonstrate the significant value of Eco-Translatology in handling cultural differences, language conversion, and maintaining the ecological structure of the original text. Moreover, Eco-Translatology theory has also been used in the study and translation practice guidance of political texts, classical literature, as well as in the research and translation of modern language and culture. Through these studies, it is evident that Eco-Translatology plays a crucial role in promoting cross-cultural communication and understanding.

3. Overview of the Translation and Research of Minority Literature Works

3.1. Minority Oral Literature

As an important cultural heritage, oral literature is passed down through oral tradition and encompasses various forms such as myths, legends, and epics. Minority oral literature is not only a manifestation of national classics but also a core component of folk literature. It reflects the collective wisdom and individual life experiences, closely intertwined with the scenes of life and the course of life. This form of literature is full of vitality and the essence of nature, and its inheritors, texts, and folk transmission mechanisms together constitute the important context of the oral literary ecosystem. The transmission of oral literature is not only the inheritance of cultural memory but also the convergence of cultural emotion and identity, demonstrating profound cultural and social values. It reflects the history, spiritual wisdom, and values of

the ethnic groups.

In China, the study and preservation of oral traditions are gradually receiving attention. In the early 20th century, with the literary revolution and ideological innovation, the literary value of oral traditions was rediscovered and systematically recorded and organized. These oral traditions are not only a key component of cultural heritage but also a witness to the development of human civilization. Many ethnic minorities pass down cultural knowledge and social norms through oral traditions, which is of great significance for their social cohesion and identity recognition.

3.2. Overview of Research on the English Translation of Domestic Minority Classics

Shen Jie and Wang Hong summarized the general characteristics of the English translation of domestic minority classics in China. They pointed out that due to differences in the attention received by the original texts, translation history backgrounds, and publication times, the related English translation research presents a varied scale and depth of study. Some classics have an early start and rich achievements in English translation, such as those of the Mongolian and Tibetan ethnic groups; while the translation of some minority classics, especially those from the southwestern regions, started late or have just begun. From 2000 to 2019, the themes of research on the English translation of minority classics mainly included translation history review, current situation analysis, translation strategy exploration, and ethical considerations. Among these, the strategy exploration research is diverse, including micro-level analyses of metaphors, culture-loaded words, and translation styles, as well as the application of interdisciplinary theories such as "ethnopoetics."

This study belongs to the micro-level exploration of translation strategies and employs the theory of eco-translatology to analyze the handling of culture-loaded words in the English translation of ethnic classics, aiming to achieve a balance in the translation ecosystem and to provide references for subsequent English translations of classics.

Zhang Zhigang and others have pointed out that current research on the English translation of minority classics can be categorized into summary, translation methods and principles, translation theory, research methods, and book reviews. Among these, research on translation methods mostly revolves around the traditional topics of "assimilation" and "alienation" calling for researchers to innovate theoretical perspectives. This study, through the application of eco-translatology theory, represents an innovative exploration of theoretical perspectives. Additionally, the integration of interdisciplinary research methods, especially the development of corpus technology, will provide new pathways for future research on the English translation of classics.

Regarding oral literature, Shi Hongmei noted that the translation and introduction of Yunnan minority oral literature face issues such as limited translation works, insufficient systematic research, and numerous versions of mythological stories. This study selects the more recent translation of Meige to analyze the English translation of culture-loaded words in the oral epic of the Yi ethnic group.

4. Overview of Culture-Loaded Words and Their English Translation Research

4.1. Culture-Loaded Words

Culture-loaded words, also known as semantic voids, are a direct or indirect reflection of national culture in language. They manifest in forms such as idioms, proverbs, ancient terms, allusions, and colloquialisms. Scholars like Hu Wenzhong, Liao Qiyi, Bao Huiquan, and Bao Ang have further explained the definition of culture-loaded words, affirming their relationship with national characteristics and clarifying their role in disseminating the excellent traditional culture of China. [2](Li Jun, 2023).

The Yi ethnic group's epic Meige is a very important cultural heritage that reflects the rich history, culture, and philosophical concepts of the Yi people. This epic contains a large number of culture-loaded words, which not only have profound symbolic meanings but are also crucial for understanding the culture and beliefs of the Yi people.

In Meige, the classification of culture-loaded words can be approached from different angles. Based on the content and themes of the epic, culture-loaded words can be roughly categorized as follows:

(1) Vocabulary related to creation myths: These words involve Yi myths about the origin of the universe, natural phenomena, and the birth of life. For example, the epic describes the formation of heaven and earth, the origin of humans, and other contents, with vocabulary that carries the Yi people's understanding and imagination of the universe and the origin of life.

(2) Vocabulary related to religion and rituals: The epic includes descriptions of Yi religious and ritual activities, such as sacrifices and prayers. These words reflect the religious beliefs and ritual traditions of the Yi people.

(3) Vocabulary related to social structure and history: The epic also describes the social structure, historical events, and heroic figures of the Yi people. These words help to understand the social organization, historical changes, and cultural heritage of the Yi people.

(4) Vocabulary related to nature and the ecological environment: The epic depicts the relationship between the Yi people and the natural environment, including descriptions of mountains, rivers, animals, and plants. These words reflect the Yi people's cognition and respect for the natural world.

(5) Vocabulary related to morality and ethics: The epic includes the moral concepts and ethical norms of the Yi people, such as descriptions of good and evil, justice and injustice. These words embody the values and moral education of the Yi people.

Through an in-depth analysis of the culture-loaded words in Meige we can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the Yi people's cultural traditions, belief systems, and values. These words are not only a part of the Yi language but also important symbols of Yi culture and identity.

5. Classification, Characteristics, and Translation Principles of Culture-Loaded Words

According to Eugene Nida's (1993) perspective, culture-loaded words are categorized into five types: ecological, material, social, folk, and linguistic culture-loaded words. [3]

Combining the concept of culture-loaded words with relevant literature, it can be understood that culture-loaded words typically possess the following three characteristics: specificity, meaning they are words within a specific cultural scope; strangeness, meaning they are unfamiliar or not understood by other ethnic groups; and non-equivalence, due to cultural differences, it is difficult or impossible to find vocabulary with equivalent meanings in the target language. Considering the specificity of culture-loaded words and the non-equivalence in translation.

When translating, the following principles should be followed: the accurate expression of the source language vocabulary's meaning is more important than formal correspondence. The manifestations of culture-loaded words are usually relatively simple, but their connotations are rich. The translator should not be limited by the expression form of culture-loaded words and should convey the deep meaning of the vocabulary as concisely as possible. The translator should fully consider the context of the source language vocabulary and should not exaggerate or deviate from the context of the source language expression. The context in which culture-loaded words are situated often has distinct regional characteristics or temporal features; the translator should fully integrate the context, consider the thoughts and culture conveyed by the translation, and adopt a translation that more closely expresses the semantics. The translation should fully retain the linguistic characteristics of the source language and reduce the loss of cultural imagery. When translating idioms or puns in culture-loaded words, there should be an intention to transfer the linguistic forms, expression habits, and cultural imagery from the source language, highlighting the exoticism of the source language, preserving its linguistic characteristics, and enhancing the exotic cultural traits. (Li Jun, 2023) [4]

6. Text Analysis

6.1. Carrier of Religious Beliefs

Religious culture-loaded words refer to vocabulary that reflects specific religious beliefs, traditions, religious institutions, and other aspects. These words are unique to a particular culture and represent the unique ways of activities that a nation has gradually accumulated over the course of history, distinct from other ethnic groups. Religious culture-loaded vocabulary not only embodies specific cultural phenomena but also reflects the different understandings of things by different cultural groups. They possess distinct national characteristics, are the essence of the national language, and are the most direct reflection of national culture.

Case 1: The names of the children of the god Gezi in the sky.

Original text: 格滋天神要造天, 他放下九个金果, 变成九个儿子, 九个儿子中五个来造天。一个叫阿赌, 一个叫庶顽, 一个叫贪闹, 一个叫顽连, 一个叫朵闹, 这是造天的儿子。

translation:

One was Adu,
One was Shuwan,
One was Tannao,
One was Wanlian,
One was Duonao.
They are the ones to create the sky.

Original text: 格滋天神要造地, 他放下七个银果, 七个姑娘中, 四个来造地, 一个叫扎则, 一个叫戮则, 一个叫慈则, 一个叫勤则。

translation:

One was Zhaze,
One was Jianze,
One was Cize,
One was Qinze.

In this version of the "Meige" translation, there are instances where the deep cultural meanings of religious culture-loaded words are not adequately conveyed.

The translation of this passage, while faithfully reproducing the names of the characters from the original text, falls short in both the "Shang Sheng" (revering life) and "She Sheng" (nurturing life) aspects, with insufficient conveyance of cultural imagery. From the perspective of the "Shang Sheng" principle, the translation should strive to preserve the vitality and cultural imagery of the original text, which is to maintain the positive or negative connotations inherent in the names of the characters. These names are not just simple combinations of syllables; they carry rich cultural information and value judgments. For instance, the names "Ci" (charitable) and "Qin" (diligent) convey the virtuous images of kindness and hard work associated with the heavenly god's daughters, while "Wan" (stubborn), "Tan" (greedy), and "Nao" (noisy) reflect the negative characteristics of stubbornness, greed, and noisiness in the heavenly god's sons. This naming convention not only vividly describes the personality traits of the

characters but also reflects the cultural background's standards for moral and behavioral judgment. Therefore, the translator needs to consider how to convey these cultural meanings in the target language, avoiding mere transliteration that overlooks the connotations of the original text. From the "She Sheng" principle, the translator should not only preserve the cultural vitality of the original but also consider the adaptability to the target language culture. The translation should make appropriate adjustments while ensuring that the target language readers can understand and accept the original cultural imagery. Merely transliterating the names might prevent the target language readers from correctly understanding the positive or negative implications contained within these names, leading to a loss of cultural information. To remedy this shortcoming, the translator can use additional translation or annotation methods to explain the meanings of the names while retaining the transliteration, thereby helping the target language readers better understand the cultural background and personality traits of these characters.

Case 2: God Gezi; Tiger

原文:	译文:
格滋天神来造人。	God Gezi was going to create humans.
天上洒下三把雪，	Three handfuls of snow fell from the sky,
落地变成三代人。	And became three generations of people on earth.
洒下第一把是第一代，	The first handful was the first generation,
洒下第二把是第二代，	The second handful was the second generation.
洒下第三把是第三代。	The third handful was the third generation.

原文:	译文:
关于老虎的例子	They didn't give out the tiger's head,
虎头莫要分，	Which was used as the head of the sky.
虎头作天头。	They didn't give out its tail,
虎尾莫要分，	Which was used as the tail of the earth.
虎尾作地尾。	They didn't give out its nose,
虎鼻莫要分，	Which was used as the nose of the sky.
虎鼻作天鼻。	They didn't give out its ears,
虎耳莫要分，	Which were used as the ears of the sky.
虎耳作天耳。	

This translation example conveys the basic meaning of "God Gezi" in a direct and concise manner through transliteration, ensuring the basic readability of the translated text. However, from the perspective of "Shang Sheng" (revering life), the use of transliteration alone by the translator does not help the target language readers understand the significant connotations of "God Gezi" in Yi culture. In Yi culture, God Gezi is not only the creator god in the creation myth of the Yi people in Yunnan, who, along with his five sons and four daughters, created the heavens and earth, scattered three handfuls of snow that turned into three generations of people, but also, in the myth of God Gezi, the heavens and earth were transformed from various parts of a tiger's body. For instance, the tiger's left eye became the sun, and the right eye became the moon. This reflects the Yi people's worship of the tiger, as they anciently referred to themselves as the Tiger Clan. The Yi tiger totem has multiple symbolic meanings: firstly, it represents strength and courage,

as the Yi people view the tiger as a source of power, symbolizing bravery and resilience; secondly, the tiger totem symbolizes authority and rule, as there was a historical title of "Tiger Sovereign" among the Yi, indicating the tiger's leadership role in Yi society; [5] furthermore, the tiger totem also symbolizes procreation and growth, as the Yi believe the tiger brings blessings of fertility; in addition, it represents justice and order, with the tiger often embodying justice in Yi folk tales; and finally, the tiger totem is a symbol of Yi cultural identity and national spirit, reinforcing the cohesion and identity of the Yi ethnic group. [6]

Merely transliterating "God Gezi" as well as the tiger and its body parts in the translation, is not conducive to the readers' understanding of the deep meanings of God Gezi in Yi culture. From the perspective of "She Sheng" (nurturing life), the author could combine domestication strategies with cultural annotations to help readers understand the complex meanings of God Gezi and the tiger in Yi culture, thereby

achieving a successful transplation of the life of the original text.

Case 3 gourd

原文:	译文:
妹妹怀孕了,	Then she was pregnant.
怀了九个月,	After a nine-month pregnancy,
生下一个怪葫芦。	She gave birth to a weird gourd.
原文:	译文:
武姆勒娃说:	Wumulewa said:
“人心很不好,	"This generation is unkind,
要换人种了,	It must be replaced.
水要漫金山,	The earth will be flooded
大水快发了。	And mountains will be submerged.
.....	...
小弟弟你良心好,	"Youngest brother, you are very kind,
给你三颗葫芦籽,	I will give you three gourd seeds.
赶快回去栽葫芦。	Go home quickly and plant them."
.....	...
用高山的松香封住葫芦口;	Your sister and you will move into the gourd,
箐底的黄蜡封住葫芦口;	Seal the opening with mountain rosin,
你兄妹搬进葫芦里,	Paste it with wild yellow wax.
饿了就吃葫芦籽。	You can eat the gourd seeds when hungry."

The translation of this passage, while literally faithful to the original text, fails to fully convey the significant cultural connotations of the "gourd" in Yi culture from the perspective of "She Sheng" (nurturing life) in eco-translatology. In the mythological system of the Yi people, the gourd is not just an ordinary object; it carries religious and cultural symbolic meanings of fertility worship, ancestral myths, and protective deities. [7] The original text mentions how a brother and sister hid in a gourd to escape the flood and subsequently gave birth to descendants, with the sister giving birth to various ethnic groups from the gourd; this plot reflects the gourd's important status as a symbol of life's origin and protection. Qi Angkun and Zhang Hui (2024) propose that the "She Sheng" principle requires translators to have a full understanding of the cultural background, related allusions, and implicit meanings of the source text, and to appropriately integrate these pieces of cultural information into the translation. [8] Currently, while the translation communicates the literal meaning of the gourd, it does not reflect its deep symbolic significance in Yi culture, making it difficult for target language readers to grasp the cultural value embedded in the original text. Similarly, from the perspective of "She Sheng" in the last paragraph of the translation example involving the gourd, the translator adjusted the word order according to the habits of the target language, bringing the subject to the front for clearer logic, which helps to maintain an ecological balance between the original and translated texts.

Case 4 Duoxi

原文:	译文:
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又请朵魏来送鬼,	We sent for the wizard to drive away ghosts,
鬼也送过了,	Ghosts were driven away,
我爹的病没有好,	But Dad's illness was not cured,
我妈的病没有好,	Mom's illness was not cured, either.
爹妈越病越重了!	Their illnesses were even worse!

This translation example effectively realizes the "reincarnation" of culture by employing a domestication strategy, allowing target language readers to quickly grasp the basic meaning of the text and highlighting the acceptability of the translation to a certain extent. In the original text, "Duoxi" is a unique religious figure in Yi culture with specific cultural connotations. In this case, the translation renders "Duoxi" as "wizard" adopting a "reincarnation" strategy and using domestication to make it easier for target language readers to understand. The advantage of this translation method is that it immediately creates an intuitive impression for English readers, making the transmission of the text smoother. For readers unfamiliar with Yi culture, the term "wizard" allows them to quickly associate it with similar images of sorcerers, thus avoiding obstacles due to the unfamiliar cultural element during the reading process. It is evident that the translation successfully achieves the effect of "reincarnation" and adapts to the cultural cognitive habits of the target language readers. However, the translator did not fully consider the complex role of "Duoxi" in Yi culture, simplifying the deep meaning of this cultural symbol and weakening the ecological cultural connotation of the text. From the perspective of "Shang Sheng" (revering life), the translation does not loyally reproduce the cultural ecology in the original text. The Yi "Duoxi" is not just a simple wizard character but a divinely ordained figure closely related to the Yi religion, faith, and culture. It not only exorcises ghosts and cures diseases but also symbolizes the connection with nature and spirits, being an important part of the Yi religious ecology. [9,10] Therefore, while the domesticated translation may be easier to understand, it does not provide sufficient cultural background information to help readers truly comprehend the deep significance of this character in the original text. [11]

6.2. The Representation of Social Culture

Case 1 sowing

原文: 撒种

译文: Sowing

annotation: (both in English and Chinese)

撒种: 是在讨了媳妇的第二天清早唱的一段用二人扮牛, 在子棚里犁地撒种 (男的代表新郎家, 女的代表新娘家)

Sowing: It is sung on the morning following the wedding day in the performance in the wedding shed, a man is allowing the field and a woman is scattering seats. They represent the bride groom's family and bride's family respectively.

The translation succinctly and accurately conveys the meaning of the culture-loaded term "sowing seeds" making it easy for target language readers to understand. The bilingual cultural annotation in the footnote here fully demonstrates the "Shang Sheng" translation attitude—the "Meige" describes Yi folk customs, and this translation was first rendered into Chinese by a Yi-Chinese bilingual expert and then translated into English. Therefore, this bilingual annotation of cultural

customs is beneficial for both Chinese and English readers to understand the Yi social and cultural connotations carried by the culture-loaded term, making it very necessary. It helps the life of the original text to be "transformed" in the translation.

Case 2 the 12 Chinese zodiacs

原文:	译文
属牛日来烧,	Burning the fields on the day of the ox,
恐怕烧着牛。	Would probably harm the ox.
属虎日来烧,	Burning the fields on the Day of the Tiger
恐怕烧着虎。	Would probably harm the tiger.
属兔日来烧,	Burning the fields on the Day of the Rabbit
恐怕烧着兔。	Would probably harm the rabbit.
属龙日来烧,	Burning the fields on the Day of the Dragon
恐怕烧着龙。	Would probably harm the dragon.
属蛇日来烧,	Burning the fields on the Day of the Snake
恐怕烧着蛇。	Would probably harm the snake.
属马日来烧,	Burning the fields on the Day of the Horse
恐怕烧着马。	Would probably harm the horse.
属羊日来烧,	Burning the fields on the Day of the Goat
恐怕烧着羊。	Would probably harm the goat.
属猴日来烧,	Burning the fields on the Day of the Monkey
恐怕烧着猴。	Would probably harm the monkey.
属鸡日来烧,	Burning the fields on the Day of the Rooster
恐怕烧着鸡。	Would probably harm the rooster.
属狗日来烧,	Burning the fields on the Day of the Dog
恐怕烧着狗。	Would probably harm the dog.
属猪日来烧,	Burning the fields on the Day of the Pig
恐怕烧着猪。	Would probably harm the pig.
最后商量好,	Finally they decided to do the burning
选在属鼠日。	On the Day of the Rat,

The translation directly translates the animals related to the Chinese zodiac in the original text, succinctly conveying the various animals corresponding to the twelve zodiac signs. However, from the perspective of "Shang Sheng" (revering life), the translation should fully reflect the respect for the life of the original text, which includes the profound cultural meanings carried by the culture-loaded terms. Although the Chinese zodiac has a certain degree of fame internationally, there are still many target language readers who are unfamiliar with the cultural background. A literal translation may likely lead to a lack of understanding of the cultural significance of the Chinese zodiac among target language readers.

The Chinese zodiac is a way of recording years in traditional Chinese culture and serves as birth symbols and lifelong auspicious animals for the descendants of the Chinese nation. The Han Chinese zodiac consists of 12 animals arranged in sequence, with a 12-year cycle. These animals are the rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, rooster, dog, and pig, each representing a year and influencing people's character and concepts of fate. With close interactions among various ethnic groups in China, many Chinese minorities, influenced by Han culture, also have their own versions of the zodiac, but the specific animals may differ slightly due to their living environments and ethnic

totems. The Yi people, scattered across various regions, have different zodiacs in different areas. For example, the Yi people in western Guangxi have a zodiac of dragon, phoenix, horse, ant, human, rooster, dog, pig, sparrow, ox, tiger, and snake, while the Yi people in the Ailao Mountains of Yunnan have a zodiac of tiger, rabbit, pangolin, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, rooster, dog, pig, rat, and ox. In Liangshan, Sichuan, the Yi people also use the twelve zodiac signs for calendrical purposes and fortune-telling, and they predict compatibility for marriage based on the zodiac signs of both parties. Adding relevant cultural annotations and recommending related cultural reference books in the annotations can somewhat alleviate the ecological imbalance between the original and translated texts caused by the target language readers' lack of understanding of the zodiac's background culture. [12]

Case 3 Yongchang City

原文:	译文:
驮到大理苍山	They went to the top of Cangshan
顶,	Mountain
驮到永昌城。	And to Yongchang City.

In this translation, two place names, "Cangshan Mountain" and "Yongchang City" are mentioned. Readers can infer from the context that Cangshan Mountain is located in Dali, and no supplementary annotation is needed to maintain the ecological balance between the original and translated texts. However, from the perspective of "She Sheng" (nurturing life) in eco-translatology, the translation lacks sufficient background information about Yongchang City. Yongchang City is located in today's Baoshan City, Yunnan Province. Historically, Yongchang City underwent several changes; it was once the capital of the Ailao Kingdom, later became the Buwei County during the Western Han Dynasty, and the Yongchang Prefecture was established during the Eastern Han Dynasty. During the Nanzhao and Dali Kingdom periods, it was known as Yongchang Jiedu, the Yuan Dynasty established the Dali Jinchidi Xuanweisi Duyuanshuifu, and during the Ming and Qing dynasties, it was set as Yongchang Prefecture. The ruins of the ancient city of Yongchang include city walls and gates, making it a famous historical and cultural city in the western region of Yunnan. Many locals in Yunnan may not be familiar with the location and cultural background of Yongchang City, let alone the target language readers. Therefore, the translation could benefit from adding annotations about the cultural background of Yongchang City, which would help target language readers better understand the rich geographical and cultural connotations of "Yongchang City" successfully reproducing the life of the original text in the translation. This could also serve as a form of tourism promotion.[13,14]

6.3. The Inheritance of Historical and cultural Heritage.

Case 1 Yingtianfu (Nanjing)

Original text: 抬到南京应天府

Translation: To Yingtianfu (Nanjing)

Annotation: The Han people of Yunnan say that their ancestors came from Yingtianfu (Nanjing). The Yi chanters of Meige insert it in their story.

The translation employs a strategy of transliteration with annotation, maximizing the preservation of the phonetic features of the culture-loaded term "Nanjing Ying Tian Fu" which demonstrates respect for the life of the original text and meets the requirement of "Shang Sheng" (revering life). In the

footnote of the translation, an explanation is provided about the cultural roots of the Han people living locally with Nanjing Ying Tian Fu, which helps to protect the cultural ecology of the original text and assist in the "reincarnation" of the original. It also reflects the translator's "Shang Sheng" attitude towards translation and helps readers understand that there were interactions between the Yi and Han ancestors. However, "Ying Tian Fu" was the capital city of the early to mid-Ming Dynasty located in Nanjing, serving as the political, economic, and cultural center of the Ming Dynasty.[15] Merely transliterating it in the translation and annotations does not convey its meaning as an ancient capital. Guided by the thought of "reincarnation" and combined with the "She Sheng" (nurturing life) strategy, translating it as "The Celestial Capital Prefecture" and supplementing it with a cultural explanation in the footnote would be more conducive to the complete representation of the original text's ecology.[16]

6.4. The Conveying of Material Culture

Case 1 赶亲棍

原文:	译文:	注释:
十二道桥搭起来,	Twelve bridges are put up,	新亲要走时送的礼物。
新亲要走了,	Your new relatives are hitting the road,	
可有赶亲棍?	Do you have gifts for them?	

The translation of "gǎn qīn gùn" as "gifts for them" embodies the guiding principle of "She Sheng" (nurturing life) and has conveyed the core meaning of the culture-loaded term "gǎn qīn gùn" to the English target readers. Since "gǎn qīn gùn" is a culture-loaded term in Yi culture, target readers who speak Chinese may not be familiar with the cultural connotations carried by the term. The translator has provided cultural explanations in the Chinese annotation section, achieving the regeneration of the original text's ecology at both the Chinese and English levels.

Case 2 Lusheng

原文:	译文:
吹着芦笙,	They tooted the gourd mouth organ,
吹着笛子,	Blew the flute,
弹起响箎山头吹一调,	Played the jaw harp,
山尾弹一曲,	From the hilltop to the valley,
快乐得起来,	They made merry They sang,
唱得起来,	The female swineherds were happy,
放猪的女人喜欢,	The shepherds felt pleased.
放羊的男人喜欢。	

The translation directly and succinctly conveys the meaning of the culture-loaded term "Lusheng." However, the Lusheng holds a significant and multifaceted role in Yi culture, which requires target language readers to understand and even consult additional materials to fully appreciate. The music of the Lusheng has a certain semantic quality within Yi culture, being referred to as "Lusheng speaking." This musical form carries the important mission of transmitting values, stories, and traditions, playing a pivotal role in welcoming guests, marriage ceremonies, folk dances and festivals, daily life, and

traditional celebrations. Moreover, the existence of Lusheng culture in both Yi and Miao cultures reflects the exchange and mutual influence between these two ethnic groups in terms of culture, history, and social practices. If annotations were added to explain the cultural connotations of the Lusheng, it could potentially better assist in re-creating the original text's ecology and achieving a "reincarnation" of the original text in the translation.

6.5. The Reflection of Ecological Culture

Case 1

原文:	译文:	注释(中文):
李桂秧鸟	In the valleys,	李桂秧: 一种鸟的俗名
大山大箐里,	The liguiyang bird was chirping.	
李桂秧叫起来了,	That meant spring was coming.	
春季就到了。		

The translation treats Li Guiyaniao (Li Gui Yangjiao) through transliteration, preserving the phonetic characteristics of the bird's Chinese name. However, from the perspective of "Shang Sheng" (revering life), translation should strive to maintain the vitality and cultural imagery of the original text. A simple transliteration does not allow target language readers to understand the cultural significance of Li Guiyaniao. Also known as Li Gui Yangjiao, this bird is native to Mount Emei, characterized by its gray fur and white belly. It is known for its unique call, "Li Guiyaniao" and is often seen flying in the mountains, streams, and forests. The name of the bird is associated with a legend about brotherly love, telling the story of two brothers, Li Guigui and Li Gui Yang, who together overcame the difficulties imposed by their stepmother. This bird is thus linked to this touching story and has become a feature of the Mount Emei area.

The original text's mention of Li Guiyaniao indicates that the Yi ancestors reached the Mount Emei area and had knowledge of the birds and animals there. If the translation were to include relevant cultural background annotations, this would not only help target language readers understand the rich cultural connotations of Li Guiyaniao but also showcase the moral identity of the Chinese ancestors who lived around Mount Emei.[17]

Case 2

原文:	译文:
坝区岩石顶上,	On the top of the rocks,
撒下鸡嗦子树。	Were planted the dogwoods.

In the original text, "Jisuozi tree" refers to the Cornus species in the Caprifoliaceae family. The translator directly translates it as "dogwood Cornus" which is easy for target language readers to understand the reference in the original text. From the perspectives of "She Sheng" (nurturing life) and "Zhuansheng" (reincarnation), the translator has adopted a domestication-oriented translation strategy and approach, allowing the essence of life in the original text to be presented in the translation. However, from the perspective of "Shang Sheng" (revering life), the "Jisuozi tree" translated from the Yi language into Chinese is a local nickname used by the Yi people for this tree species. Upon consultation of image materials, it is likely that the local Yi ancestors referred to Cornus as "Jisuozi tree" because its fruits resemble the "Jisuozi" (the expanded part of a chicken's esophagus, used

for storing and softening food) in both appearance and color. The distinctive nickname "Jisuozi tree" reflects the Yi ancestors' unique observations and understanding of nature. If the translator simply uses the domestication strategy to translate it as "dogwood" it may result in the loss of the ecological and cultural connotations it carries. The translator could combine amplification or annotation with images to help readers understand why the Yi ancestors referred to "Cornus" as "Jisuozi tree" while also successfully completing the "reincarnation" of the original text.[18]

Case 3

原文:	译文:
坝区山腰上,	On the hillside of the flatland were sowed
撒了罗汉松。	The yellowwood trees.

In the original text, "Luohansong" refers to a tree of the Podocarpaceae family, the Podocarpus genus, which is a tall tree with a form similar to that of a Luohan, a Buddhist deity clad in a sash. The translation of "Luohansong" as "yellowwood" which is used to denote "frankincense locust" or "yellow wood" is not precise enough. "Yellowwood" is not the official scientific name or widely accepted English name for Podocarpus. The Latin binomial name for Podocarpus is *Podocarpus macrophyllus*. "Yellowwood" can be used to describe any type of wood with a yellow color, but Podocarpus is not yellow. Upon research, it is found that there are parallel texts that use "yellowwood" to translate "Luohansong" but this translation is not the best version. From the perspective of "Shang Sheng" (revering life), the translator should fully understand the relevant cultural background of the original text and accurately grasp its meaning. This translation may lead to misunderstandings among target language readers. From the perspective of "She Sheng" (nurturing life), merely translating at the biological level would result in the loss of the cultural connotations inherent in the name "Luohansong" itself. Translating Luohansong as "Buddhist Pine" not only helps readers understand the tree species to which it belongs but also conveys the semantic connection between this tree and the "Luohans" evoking associations in the reader's mind.[19]

7. Conclusion

In this paper, the author has summarized the main categories of culture-loaded terms in the translation of "Meige" based on the "Four-Live Maxim" perspective of eco-translatology. From the perspectives of "Shang Sheng" (revering life), "She Sheng" (nurturing life), "Zhuansheng" (reincarnation), and "Huasheng" (metamorphosis), the author has analyzed the strengths and weaknesses of the translation of culture-loaded terms in the target version, with the aim of providing some insights for the translation practice of minority literature.

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