

A Study on the Translation of Instructions for Heat-Clearing and Detoxifying Traditional Chinese Medicines under the Functional Equivalence Theory

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Abstract:

Heat-clearing and detoxifying traditional Chinese medicines are an important part and distinctive advantage of China's medical and health undertakings. Traditional Chinese medicine is an outstanding traditional culture of the Chinese nation and a unique and significant health resource in our country. The rapidly growing international market has created excellent opportunities for the export of heat-clearing and detoxifying traditional Chinese medicines. Currently, the English translation of instructions for proprietary Chinese medicines lacks unified translation standards and the guidance of translation theories. The existing English translations of instructions for proprietary Chinese medicines in our country have problems such as confusion and non-standardization. Therefore, the research on the instructions of heat-clearing and detoxifying medicines under the functional equivalence theory is highly significant. This paper takes several common heat-clearing and detoxifying medicines available on the market as examples, analyzes the problems and their causes in the translation of the instructions from the perspective of the functional equivalence theory, and finds more reasonable and standardized translation methods. It helps foreign consumers understand the characteristics and functions of traditional Chinese medicine, thereby stimulating their consumption desires. This paper studies the translation process using the functional equivalence theory, investigates the structure and language features of the instructions for traditional Chinese medicine, and discusses the corresponding translation strategies for the instructions of heat-clearing and detoxifying traditional Chinese medicines at the lexical and syntactic levels respectively to achieve functional equivalence.

Keywords: Functional Equivalence; Traditional Chinese Medicine; Heat-Clearing and Detoxifying; Instructions for Medical Products; Translation

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

With the frequent international exchanges in the field of medicine, Chinese patent medicines have attracted increasing international attention. Medical researchers are also devoting more energy and time to medical research [1]. They are striving to study how to use the right drugs in the correct way to cure patients. The instruction manual is an important accessory of drugs and is closely related to the end consumers. Therefore, more and more medical scholars and experts have begun to focus on the research of the translation of Chinese patent medicine instruction manuals. Yu Yang pointed out in "Research on the Translation of English Drug Instruction Manuals"[2] that when translating English or Chinese drug instruction manuals,

one must first understand the basic language features of Chinese and English, and then under the guidance of this knowledge, select appropriate words, sentences or methods for translation to ensure the accuracy and readability of the translation. Wang Ling mentioned in her *The English Translation of the Instruction Manual of Chinese Patent Medicines - Taking Niu Huang Qingxin Pills as an Example* [3] that the translation of the instruction manual of Chinese patent medicines is more difficult than that of ordinary Western medicine due to its strong characteristics of traditional Chinese medicine culture. This requires translators to be not only proficient in Chinese and English but also familiar with medical English. There are many differences between English and Chinese language cultures, and there is no unified translation standard. All these make the translations of most Chinese patent medi-

cine instruction manuals unsatisfactory. There are a wide variety of Chinese patent medicine instruction manuals on the market, and the translation texts are difficult to understand. To sum up, it is imperative to improve the translation quality of Chinese patent medicine instruction manuals. If Chinese medicine wants to go global, the translation of Chinese medicine must be more standardized and improved. This article applies the functional equivalence theory to the translation of Chinese patent medicine instruction manuals, hoping to make the greatest contribution to the translation of Chinese patent medicine instruction manuals and the export of Chinese patent medicines.

1.2 Research Significance

Medicine is closely related to people's lives. With the continuous progress of medical care and the expansion of trade between China and other countries around the world, Chinese patent medicines have entered overseas markets and played an active role in international trade. The translation quality of drug instruction manuals can provide consumers with detailed and accurate drug information. At the same time, it can also build a necessary bridge between drugs and patients. We should consider the target language readers and let them decide whether to purchase the drugs on the basis of fully understanding the drugs. And heat-clearing and detoxifying drugs have functions of anti-virus, anti-bacteria, and anti-endotoxin, and are also called "traditional Chinese medicine antibiotics". Although this statement is not very rigorous because heat-clearing and detoxifying drugs have obvious effects on heat-toxic symptoms, they have also been recognized by the majority of consumers. Therefore, this paper takes heat-clearing and detoxifying Chinese patent medicines as the research object to study the translation of the "dynamic equivalence" problem in the instructions of heat-clearing and detoxifying traditional Chinese medicines under the functional equivalence theory.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Basic Concepts

2.1.1 Instruction Manual of Chinese Patent Medicines

The purpose of an instruction manual is to describe things in detail so that people can understand and recognize things well. The content of the instructions always requires respecting the objective facts of things and describing things truthfully. The things described in the instruction manual must not be exaggerated or fabricated for a certain purpose. The current definition of the instruction manual of Chinese patent medicines is that it is a legal document containing important information about the drug and is a guide for consumers to choose drugs.

There are also some specific Chinese patent medicines that are not easy to translate and require special attention: The two characters "Lianhua" are the abbreviations of the first characters of the two medicinal materials "Forsythia suspensa" and "Lonicera japonica", so they should not be wrongly translated as "Lotus" in English. Since "Lianhua" refers to two different medicinal materials, the translator can capitalize the first letters of its pinyin as Lian Hua. The two characters "Qingwen" are understood in the medicinal property as "clearing pestilential heat. If the translator directly translates it as heat clearing, the translation will be rather wordy and inconvenient for foreign users to understand the word. Therefore, the translator can translate it freely as "antipyretic", which is convenient for readers to understand the applicable symptoms of this medicine. The drug instruction manual is not simply putting information together but organizing it in a coherent and orderly manner to convey the necessary information to consumers. According to the regulations of the "Drug Instruction Manual"[4], Chinese patent medicines should be labeled in the main aspects such as drug name, drug specification, drug production enterprise, drug approval document, drug usage, dosage, contraindications, adverse reactions, precautions, etc.

2.1.2 Functional Equivalence Theory

The functional equivalence theory was proposed by Eugene Nida, an American [5]. He once served as the former president of the Linguistic Society of America. The main definition of Nida's theory is "functional equivalence". "Equivalence" means that when translating, do not make a superficial and rigid equivalence, but achieve the functional equivalence between the two languages. Translation should obey the pronunciation habits, thinking habits and emotional feelings of the target recipients. Translators should use some relevant translation methods and strategies according to the specific contents, such as the name and function of Chinese patent medicines, to make the instruction manual of Chinese patent medicines coordinate with the original one. In this way, foreign consumers can clearly know the specific content of the instruction manual. Nida believed that a good translation should express the information of the original text in the closest and most natural equivalent language. That is, it should express both the meaning and the style [6].

2.2 Review of the Translation of Instruction Manuals of Chinese Patent Medicines

2.2.1 Domestic Research

At present, the translation of the instruction manuals of Chinese patent medicines has not received enough attention. From CNKI, there are about 66 records about

“Translation of Instruction Manuals of Chinese Patent Medicines” and “Traditional Chinese Medicine Prescriptions” (<https://www.cnki.net/index>). According to the research topic, the research on the translation of heat-clearing and detoxifying Chinese patent medicines mainly has three aspects: translation theory translation principles and strategies and existing problems.

2.2.2 Foreign Research

Compared with domestic studies, foreign studies are more comprehensive and diverse. It not only includes the aspect of linguistics but also special translation issues. However, due to the scarcity of materials, this kind of research on the translation of the instruction manuals of Chinese patent medicines is very rare.

2.3 Review of the Functional Equivalence Theory

In recent years, traditional academic researchers have explored the translation strategies and methods of traditional Chinese medicine and analyzed the application of Nida’s functional equivalence theory in the translation of traditional Chinese medicine in the past ten years. Their original ideas have laid a practical and theoretical foundation for the development of traditional Chinese medicine culture [7].

2.3.1 Reasons for Choosing the Functional Equivalence Theory as Guidance

According to the functional equivalence theory, the purpose of translation will be considered first, and a translation that conforms to the original meaning will be created. And the original meaning refers not only to the original text itself but also to the original intention. The instruction manual of Chinese patent medicines, as an important medium of drugs, conveys so much available information. The translation of the instruction manual of Chinese patent medicines, as a pragmatic translation, requires translators to consider the function of the translation and the target language readers. More importantly, when translating the instruction manual of Chinese patent medicines, the essence of Chinese patent medicines must be conveyed and presented in a natural form. Therefore, the functional equivalence theory is very suitable for the translation of the instruction manual of Chinese patent medicines.

3. The Translation Research of Instruction Manuals of Heat-Clearing and Detoxifying Traditional Chinese Medicines.

3.1 Case Study of Instruction Manuals of Heat-Clearing and Detoxifying Traditional Chinese Medicines and the Existing Problems

3.1.1 Lack of Lexical Equivalence in the Translation of Traditional Chinese Medicine Names

Table 1:Take Sanhuang Tablets as an example

	Chinese	Translation
Drug name	三黄清热清瘟片	Sanhuang Tablet
function and attending	清热解毒，清瘟通便。用于三焦热盛所致的目赤肿痛，口鼻生疮，咽喉肿痛，牙龈肿痛，心烦口渴，尿黄便秘。	Clearing heat and detoxifying, purging fire and defecating. It is used for eye red swelling, sore mouth and nose, sore throat,swollen gums, upset thirst,yellow urine constipation caused by sanjiao heat.
ingredient	大黄，盐酸小檗碱，黄芩浸膏。辅料为苯甲酸钠，淀粉，硬脂酸镁，滑石粉，蔗糖，阿拉伯胶，明胶，虫白蜡，二甲硅油，柠檬黄	Rhubarb,berberine hydrochloride, Huangling extract. Excipients are sodium benzoate, starch, magnesium stearate, talc powder,sucrose,gum Arabic, gelatin, insect white wax, dimethicone, lemon yellow
Usage and dosage	口服。一次4片，一日2次。	Oral. Four tablets, twice a day.
Approval number	国药准字 Z37021352	Z37021352

The translation of traditional Chinese medicine names can use two methods: transliteration and free translation. For example, Please see Table 1, the word “qingre” (清热) can be transliterated as “qingre”, or it can be translated as “clearing heat”. The two characters “qingwen” (清

瘟) are understood in the medicinal property as “clearing pestilential heat”. If the translator directly translates it as “heatclearing”, the translation will be rather wordy and inconvenient for foreign users to understand. Therefore, the translator can translate it freely as “antipyretic”, which

is convenient for readers to understand the applicable symptoms of this medicine. In addition, when translating the names of traditional Chinese medicines, translators should also pay attention not to have multiple names for one medicine. This can easily lead to uncertainty and confusion among foreign consumers when purchasing this medicine, and then lead to chaos in the drug market. Translators should maintain a certain flexibility when

translating the names of traditional Chinese medicines. They should avoid literal translation. They should fully consider the reading habits and abilities of users from different countries or ethnic groups and make the translation of traditional Chinese medicine names as easy to understand as possible [8].

3.1.2 Lack of Lexical Equivalence in the Translation of Traditional Chinese Medicine Ingredients

Table 2:Take the Heat-Clearing and Detoxifying Granules as an example

	Chinese	Translation
Drug name	清热解毒颗粒	Qingre Jiedu granule
function and attending	清热解毒, 养阴生津, 泻火。用于风热型感冒	Clearing heat and detoxifying, nourishing Yin and promoting fluid, purging fire. For wind-heat type cold
ingredient	黄连, 水牛角, 玄参, 金银花, 地黄, 大青叶, 连翘, 知母, 石膏。	Coptis, Buffalo horn, Scrophulariae, honeysuckle, Rehmannia, Radix green leaf, forsythia, Rhizome, gypsum
Usage and dosage	开水冲服。一次 18 克, 一日 3 次。	Take with boiling water. 18 grams, three times a day
Approval number	国药准字 Z19991038	Z19991038

Please see Table 2, The main ingredients of the above-mentioned heat-clearing and detoxifying drugs include Forsythia suspensa, Lonicera japonica, Ephedra (sunburned), Fried Bitter Almonds, Gypsum, Radix Isatidis, Dryopteris crassirhizoma, Houlttuynia cordata, Pogostemon cablin, Rhubarb, Rhodiola rosea, Menthol, and Licorice. These Chinese herbal medicines generally have fixed translations, such as Forsythia suspensa (Forsythi) and Lonicera japonica (Honeysuckle). It should be

noted that when the translator translates the two medicinal materials “Ephedra (sunburned)” and “Bitter Almonds (fried)”, the pharmaceutical methods in the brackets also need to be translated, so that the expression can be clearer. That is, the translation of “Ephedra (sunburned)” is Ephedra (sunburned); the translation of “Bitter Almonds (fried)” is Bitter Almonds (fried).

3.1.3 Lack of Syntactic Equivalence in the Translation of Indications and Functions

Table 3:Take Pudilan Anti-inflammatory Tablets as an example

	Chinese	Translation
Drug name	蒲地蓝消炎片	Pudilan anti-inflammatory tablet
function and attending	清热解毒, 益气固表, 祛风散寒, 抗炎消肿	Clearing heat and detoxifying, anti-inflammation and detumescence. For furuncle, pharyngitis, tonsillitis.
ingredient	蒲公英, 黄芩, 苦地丁, 板蓝根	Dandelion, Scutellaria scutellaria, Radix isatis
Usage and dosage	口服。一次 2-3 片, 一日 4 次, 小儿酌减	Oral. 2-3 tablets at a time, 4 times a day, children should reduce.
Approval number	国药准字 Z12020141	Z12020141

The indications and functions are the most important part in the instruction manual of traditional Chinese medicine.

The language of indications and functions in the instruction manual of traditional Chinese medicine usually uses

four-character structural words, which are between vernacular and ancient Chinese. For example, please see Table 3, the efficacy language in this case includes clearing heat and detoxifying, benefiting qi and consolidating the exterior, dispelling wind and dispelling cold, etc. Such efficacy language is easy for Chinese people to understand, but it is a very difficult thing to translate it into English and make foreign consumers understand it clearly. In the actual investigation and study of the English translation versions of the instruction manuals of traditional Chinese medicine, it was found that many key points of the indications and functions of language were not translated accurately[9]. Many translations only described the general meaning or used more general words for translation. Such translations make foreign users unable to accurately understand the indications of this medicine.

4. The Application of Functional Equivalence in the Instruction Manuals of Heat-Clearing and Detoxifying Drugs

4.1 Lexical Level

According to Nida’s functional equivalence theory, when translating the instruction manual of heat-clearing and detoxifying traditional Chinese medicines, it is necessary to ensure that consumers can fully understand the content of the instruction manual. Therefore, during translation, attention must be paid to the functional equivalence of vocabulary. The functional equivalence of vocabulary is often reflected in the translation of product names, drug

names and pathogen names, many of which belong to proper nouns. There are no unified regulations for the equivalent translation of these proper nouns. Generally, methods such as transliteration, free translation, and a combination of transliteration and free translation can be adopted. Transliteration: tamoxifen - 他莫惜芬, augmentin - 沃克孟汀 Free translation: cholic acid - 胆酸, tetracycline - 四环素 Combination of transliteration and free translation: cathinone - 卡西酮, Timoentin - 胸腺嘧丁

4.2 Syntactic Level

The information in the medical instruction manual is objective. Therefore, the translator can adopt the literal translation method. This can not only ensure that the translation is faithful to the original text in content but also make the translation close to the original text in form, thus achieving functional equivalence in the content and form of the translation. However, during translation, we should also consider the usage habits of heat-clearing and detoxifying drugs and convert the original text into a translation form that can be widely accepted by Chinese readers in accordance with Chinese expression habits. For example, Chinese often uses active voice and short sentences. Therefore, during translation, passive sentences and long sentences in the original text should be converted into the form of active sentences and short sentences. In addition, tense expressions in Chinese usually require the help of adverbs. Therefore, when translating sentences with tense features, the translator needs to add time words, as the case may be.

4.3 Textual Level

Table 4:Take Erding Granules as an example

	Chinese	Translation
Drug name	二丁颗粒	Erding granule
function and attending	清热解毒。用于火热毒盛所致的热疔疔毒，咽喉肿痛，风热火眼。	Clearing heat and detoxifying. It is used for hot boil carbuncle, sore throat, wind heat and fire eye caused by fiery poison.
ingredient	紫花地丁，半边莲，蒲公英，板蓝根。 辅料为：乳糖，甜菊素。	Purple flower, Lobelia, dandelion, Isatis root. Excipients: lactose, stevia.
Usage and dosage	开水冲服。一次1袋，一日3次。	Take with boiling water. One bag at a time, three times a day.
Approval number	国药准字 Z22024736	Z22024736

Following the principle of functional equivalence, pay attention to the coherence of the language. It is not necessary to deliberately insist on the complete equivalence of the literal structure of the original text, but to give priority to the equivalence of meaning. For example, please see

Table 4, “clear heat and detoxify, remove lung hotness” in Erding Granules can be translated as “clear heat and detoxify, remove lung hotness”. The adaptive symptoms following the indications and functions are similar to Western modern medicine and can be translated literally.

For example, “Symptoms fever or high fever, aversion to cold, muscle soreness, nasal congestion and runny nose, cough” can be directly translated as “symptoms such as fever or high fever, aversion to cold, muscle soreness, nasal congestion and runny nose and cough”. When foreign consumers read these contents, they will understand the efficacy of this traditional Chinese medicine, and there will not be too much cognitive or comprehension deviation.

5. Conclusion

Through studying the two aspects of “dynamic equivalence” under the functional equivalence theory of the instruction manuals of heat-clearing and detoxifying traditional Chinese medicines - lexical equivalence and syntactic equivalence, it is concluded that the English translation of the instruction manual of Chinese patent medicines should abide by this equivalence relationship to achieve the maximum equivalence between the original text and the translation so that foreign consumers can better understand the instruction manual and consider purchasing. The main purpose of English drug instruction manuals is to provide people with drug information and guide people to use drugs correctly. Translation is a cross-cultural and cross-linguistic communication, which is influenced by expression habits, language structure, and political and cultural background. When translating drug instruction manuals, translators must also have certain professional knowledge in medicine, be familiar with the language features and stylistic structure of drug instruction manuals, and understand the differences between Chinese and Western cultures. With the continuous improvement of China’s opening up to the outside world, traditional Chinese medicine, as an important representative of the development achievements in China’s medical field, is gradually integrating into the international medical market. The demand for traditional Chinese medicine from people around the world will increase. The English translation of traditional Chinese medicine instruction manuals should not only reflect the original meaning of traditional Chinese medicine but also ensure that the translated content is consistent with the language habits of people in English-speaking countries [10]. It is hoped that this paper can solve some

problems in the English translation of the instruction manuals of heat-clearing and detoxifying traditional Chinese medicines and promote the research and practice of the English translation of traditional Chinese medicine instruction manuals to achieve scientific, standardized, and standardized results.

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