

Strategies of Translating Culture-Specific Items (CSIs) in Mo Yan's *Red Sorghum*

Yunchao Zuo¹
Syed Nurulakla Syed Abdullah²
Florence Haw Ching Toh³
Universiti Putra Malaysia

Abstract

This study focused on the translation of culture-specific items (CSIs) in Mo Yan's novel *Red Sorghum* and the applicability of Functionalist Theory in analysing the data. This aim was divided into three specific objectives: identifying the strategies of translating CSIs, exploring their occurrence rates, and examining whether or not functionalist theory is applicable to the analysis of data. Drawing upon Aixelá's translation strategies and Nida's classification, this study examined translation strategies within the framework of functionalist theory. The results showed that the most commonly used techniques are absolute universalisation and linguistic translation. Second, different translation procedures are required for different classifications of CSIs. Thirdly, the study found that in order to maintain artistic and aesthetic value, an aesthetic rule shall be considered in literary translation.

Keywords

Culture-specific items, occurrence rates, *Red Sorghum*, translation strategies, aesthetic rule

Introduction

In the current context of globalisation, the cross-cultural communication of literary works is receiving increasing attention. However, due to cultural differences in different countries and regions, it is often as difficult to accurately convey culture-specific items in literature to the target audience as it is to translate culture-specific items in food (Zhu et al 532). Culture-specific items refer to those objects, events, concepts, etc. that have specific meanings and values in different

¹Yunchao Zuo holds PhD from the Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM). He teaches English at Shandong Institute of Petroleum and Chemical Technology, China. His research interests include literary translation and translation theory and practice. Email: zuoyunchao@sdipt.edu.cn <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2682-8861>

²Syed Nurulakla Syed Abdullah is a senior lecturer at Universiti Putra Malaysia. His research interests include translation, modern and classical texts (Arabic-English-Malay), and literary translation. Email: syedakla@upm.edu.my <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4444-8822>

³Florence Haw Ching Toh is a senior lecturer at Universiti Putra Malaysia. Her research interests include literature in English, children's literature, and interdisciplinary studies in literature. Email: florence@upm.edu.my <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0991-4944>

cultural contexts, and they are often difficult to be directly translated into the target language because the cultural connotations they carry cannot find corresponding expressions in the target language or have different statuses. Mo Yan's novel *Red Sorghum* (1986) is a classic work that expresses the resilience of the people of Gaomi in Shandong Province during the war of resistance against Japan (1937-1945) and is full of national spirit. This novel includes regional vocabulary, historical events, folklore, a large number of dialects, and symbolic objects. These elements exacerbate the complexity of the culturally proprietary items, so the translator needs to consider the cultural background and cognitive habits of the target readers and fully understand the differences between the Chinese and Western historical backgrounds. In addition, translators also need to pay attention to the chronological order and causal relationship of historical events, to ensure that the translated text can present the historical atmosphere of the original text while conveying the historical information. The translator also needs to fully explore the cultural connotation of the original text and compare and relate it with the relevant legends in the target language, so as to provide readers with a richer cultural reference system. At the same time, the translator also needs to pay attention to the symbolic meaning and allegory of the folklore, so that it can be properly reflected in the translated text. All these demands on the translator bring great challenges to the translation of culture-specific items.

In the process of Chinese-to-English translation, the choice of translation strategies is of great significance in realising effective cross-cultural communication. The use of translation strategies needs the guidance of appropriate translation theories. As shown in the following discussion section, after analyzing the data, functionalist theory has a better guiding effect on the translation of culture-specific items in *Red Sorghum*. Functionalist theory is an important branch of translation theory, the core idea of which is to focus on conveying the purpose and meaning of the original text in the translation process rather than simply translating words or sentences word by word (Nord 9). The emergence of this theory is closely related to the problems faced in translation practice, such as inaccurate message transmission and difficulty in eliminating cultural differences. Skopos theory, as a translation theory, has had a wide impact worldwide since its birth in the 1970s. Its core view is that the purpose of translation behavior determines the choice of translation strategies and the evaluation of translation results (Reiss, Vermeer, and Nord). The proposal of this theory not only provides a new perspective for translation research, but also a new guiding principle for translation practice. Traditional translation theories tend to overemphasise the form and content of the original text and neglect the purpose of translation and the needs of readers (Reiss, Vermeer, and Nord). Therefore, Reiss, Vermeer, and Nord put forward a new theory of translation known as Skopos theory. The proposal of this viewpoint breaks the boundaries of traditional translation theory and makes translation research shift from a single

text analysis to a pluralistic goal analysis (Venuti 20). At the same time, Skopos theory also emphasises the importance of readers in the process of translation, and believes that translation should aim at satisfying the needs of readers rather than merely pursuing consistency with the original text (Reiss, Vermeer, and Nord). In terms of the principle of purpose, Skopos theory believes that translation should take conveying the purpose and meaning of the original text as its primary task, rather than pursuing the beauty or fluency of the language (Reiss, Vermeer, and Nord). In terms of the principle of loyalty, the theory of purpose emphasises that translation should be as faithful as possible to the meaning and expression of the original text to avoid misunderstanding or ambiguity (Nord 7). In terms of the principle of coherence, skopos theory advocates that translators should maintain the coherence and consistency of the context and avoid unnecessary repetitions or contradictions (Reiss, Vermeer, and Nord). The influence of Skopos theory on translation is mainly reflected in the following aspects: firstly, it changes our understanding of translation and makes us realise that translation is not only a process of language conversion, but also a process of cultural dissemination; secondly, it provides a new translation strategy, i.e., selecting and adjusting the translation strategy according to the purpose of translation and the readers' needs; lastly, it improves the quality of translation, makes the translation more meet the readers' needs and convey the message more effectively.

The exploration of functionalist theory abroad has roughly gone through four stages. In the first stage, Katharina Reiss, in her book *Translation Criticism - Potentials and Constraints* (1971), introduced the functional-objective approach to translation criticism and proposed several text types, arguing that different text types determine the adoption of different translation methods (Reiss 6). This is the prototype of functionalist theory. In the second stage, Hans Vermeer first proposed the functionalist theory in his 1978 book *A Theoretical Framework for General Translation* (Vermeer 99). In the third stage, Justa Holz-Manttari introduced the concept of "translation in action" in 1981, which is based on action theory. According to his model, translation is a complex action with specific goals. Translation action attempts to convey information across linguistic and cultural divides. In the fourth stage, Christiana Nord revised the Skopos theory by proposing the Function plus Loyalty Principle (Nord 27). The Function plus Loyalty Principle, as a supplement to the Functionalist Theory, states that the translator should be responsible for coordinating the different elements in the process of translation interaction (Wu 48). However, with the continuous progress and development of human society, theories need to be constantly developed and improved to meet the needs of human society. Functionalist theories have been proposed and applied and researched for many years but lack further development. In view of the above statement, the research objectives of this paper are: identifying the strategies in translating CSIs, exploring the

frequencies of strategies in translating CSIs, and examining whether functionalist theory applicable to the analysis of data.

Literature review

Classifications of CSIs

Nida's (1975) Cultural Features	Vlachov & Florin's (1980) Realia	Nord's (1997) Culture Markers (CMs)	Aixelá's (1996) Culture-Specific Items	Newmark's (2010) cultural words	Pedersen's (2011) Culture-bound references
Ecology culture □	Geographic realia	CMs with a phatic function (greetings, address, silence)	Proper nouns	Ecology culture (fauna, flora, winds, prairie)	Extralinguistic culture-specific references
Material culture	Ethnographic realia	CMs with a referential function (social life, institutions)	Common expressions	Public life	Intralinguistic culture-specific references
Social culture	Social and political realia	CMs with an expressive function (affect, social values)		Social Life	
Religious culture	Modern realia	CMs with an appellative function (gestures, cognitive scripts/frames)		Personal life	

Linguistic culture	Historical realia	Ecology/Lifestyle/History/Cultural heritage			
	Local realia				
	International realia				

Table 1 Classifications of CSIs

The complexity of culturally proprietary items and the diversity of terminology definitions lead to a diversity of classifications. Depending on the needs of the research purpose and other factors, different classifications have been proposed by different scholars such as Nida (1975), Vlachov & Florin (1980), Newmark (1988), Aixelá (1996), Nord (1997), Pedersen (2011), etc. as shown in Table 2. The classifications of Vlachov & Florin (1980), Newmark (1988), Aixelá (1996), and Nord (2011) have been used by different scholars. Florin (1980), Newmark (1988), Aixelá (1996), and Nord’s classification is too overlapping and inconsistent in terms of classification levels, while Aixelá’s and Pedersen’s classifications are at the macro level and lack detailed guidance. Nida’s proposed classification is logical and rational, conveying a wide range of topics, which is very suitable for this study, and is therefore adopted in this study. Therefore, this classification is adopted in this study.

Translation strategies of CSIs

The use of appropriate translation strategies contributes to cultural exchange and literary dissemination, and for different criteria and research purposes, numerous scholars have previously adopted different translation strategies, as shown in Table 3. Compared to the translation strategies proposed by other scholars, Aixelá’s translation is more comprehensive and systematic. It is more suitable for translating culturally proprietary items due to its effectiveness, applicability, and ability to address the specific challenges posed by translating texts in the field. These strategies help to ensure that readers understand the target language while maintaining the integrity of the meaning and style of the source text. In addition, translation is a dynamic and complex process that involves not only linguistic competence, but also cultural sensitivity and awareness. Aixelá’s strategies allow the translator to adopt flexible translation strategies according to the specific context, target audience, and the purpose of the translation, thus realising the adaptability and flexibility of the translation process. Therefore, this study adopts Aixelá’s translation strategy as a theoretical framework.

Table 2 Translation strategies of CSIs

Vlahov Florin (1980) (realia)	andNewmark (1988) (cultural terms)	Baker (1992) culture- specific concepts	Aixelá (1996) (culture- specific item)	Davies (2003) (culture- specific references)	Pedersen (2005) culture- bound references)
Transcription	Transference	Use of a loan word	Repetition /orthographic adaption (transliteration and transcription)	Preservation (form/meaning)	Retention
Explanation	Addition (notes, additions, glosses)	Use of a loan word plus explanation	Intratextual / extratextual glosses (Addition)	Addition	Specification
Generalisation/Functional analogue	Functional/descriptive equivalents	Use of a more neutral (less expressive) word/Use of a more general word (superordinate)	Universalisation (limited/absolute)	Globalisation	Generalisation
	Cultural equivalent	Cultural substitution	Naturalisation	Localisation	Cultural substitution
	Deletion	Omission	Deletion	Omission	Omission
Contextual synonym	Synonymy		Synonymy		
Semantic neologism			Autonomous creation	Creation	
Assimilation	Naturalisation				
	Recognised translation				Official equivalent
Word-for-word translation (calque or half-calque)	Through-translation				Direct translation (calque/shifted)
	Paraphrase	Paraphrase (related/unrelated word)			Paraphrase (paraphrase with sense transfer /situational paraphrase)
	Shift or transposition				
	Translation label				
	Modulation				

	Reduction and expansion				
	Componential analysis				
	Couplet/triplets / quadruplets				
			Linguistic (non-cultural) translation		
		Illustration			

Previous studies on Red Sorghum: Results and Discussion

In order to better understand the importance of culturally loaded words in facilitating intercultural communication, Xia (2023) investigated the use of Skopos theory in translating these phrases in a promotional video. An in-depth study of various translation theories was conducted by Hutaaruk et al. (2023), one of which is Skopos theory, which is considered to be the main theoretical framework guiding translation strategies. Al Awawdeh (2023) takes a unique approach by applying Skopos theory to feminist translation contexts. Skopos theory is used to demonstrate that specific translation strategies are effective in conveying feminist messages. The combination of these three papers demonstrates the flexibility and adaptability of Skopos theory in many translation scenarios. However, these articles only explored the applicability of Skopos theory and did not develop the theory of exploration, constituting a significant theoretical research gap in this study. There is therefore a need to promote the further development of the theory of purpose through the analysis of data.

Kate Benedicta Amenador and Zhiwei Wang explored the nuanced translation of CSI in the domain of Chinese-English menus. Their study scrutinises the strategies used and the factors that influence the translation process. Volovyk’s work highlights the complexities faced by translators in dealing with CSI embedded in Ukrainian and Russian fairy tales, providing insights into the potential strategies and obstacles faced in maintaining the richness and depth of the original text. Manapbayeva’s explorations focus on the treatment of “realia” in Yelubay’s novel *Ak Boz Uy*. Turzynski Azimi’s study investigates the translation process of CSI in constructing the image of Japan as a tourist destination, examining how translation strategies can affect the portrayal of a country or culture, emphasising the important role of CSI in shaping the perceptions of global audiences.

The necessity of conducting this study is evident from the gaps identified in the existing literature and the broader implications for translation studies and intercultural communication. While Skopos theory has been widely applied in various translation contexts, as seen in the works of Xia (2023), Hutaaruk et al.,

and Al-Awawdeh, these studies primarily focus on its applicability rather than its theoretical development. This gap highlights the need to further explore and refine the theory itself. Additionally, despite insights into the complexities of translating CSIs from studies such as Amenador and Wang, there is still a need for more comprehensive research on how CSIs can be effectively translated across different languages and cultures. Few studies have explored the translation of CSIs in Chinese literature, particularly in novels like *Red Sorghum*, indicating a significant gap in understanding how these items can be effectively translated to convey their cultural significance. This study aims to address these gaps by focusing on the translation strategies and factors influencing the translation of CSIs in Chinese literature, with a focus on developing Skopos theory. By doing so, it will contribute to the theoretical framework of translation studies, enhance the understanding of how cultural nuances can be preserved and communicated effectively, and provide practical insights for translators and scholars working in intercultural communication.

Method

This study used a qualitative research design to explore the translation of culturally specific items in the novel *Red Sorghum*. Qualitative research is appropriate for examining the strategies used in translating CSI as well as testing the applicability of functionalist theory in data analysis. Through content and frequency analyses, the study will shed light on the most commonly used translation strategies and provide insight into the alignment of these strategies with theoretical principles by testing the application of functionalist theory. The qualitative approach allows for an in-depth exploration and explanation of the translation process and its underlying principles.

The primary source of data for this study is Mo Yan's Chinese novel *Red Sorghum*, a text of great cultural variety and richness. The researchers identified and categorised the various CSIs present in *Red Sorghum*. These include linguistic, religious, social, and other culturally significant elements that may pose translation challenges due to their cultural constraints. Secondly, the researchers will identify translation strategies based on Aixelá's classification of translation strategies, which involves a detailed analysis of the text to identify the specific methods used in the translation process.

The data collected from the novel will be content analyzed. The CSIs identified in the text will be analyzed according to Aixelá's translation strategies, which include strategies such as language translation, cultural substitution, and spelling adaptation. Secondly, quantitative data analysis will be used to explore the frequency of strategies used in translating CSIs. This involves calculating the percentage occurrence of each strategy category in the translated text. This will help reveal which strategies are more prevalent in the translation of CSI in *Red Sorghum*. In order to test the applicability of functionalist theory in data analysis,

this study will focus on the extent to which the translation strategies are consistent with the principles of the theory. Qualitative assessment and inter-researcher consensus will be used to evaluate the need for aesthetic rules in translation in order to maintain the artistic value of the novel while ensuring that CSI is accurately represented in the translated text.

Results and discussion

Based on the translation strategy of Aixelá, through the analysis of the data, it was found that 10 translation strategies were used in the translation, among which the strategy of repetition was not suitable. Because Chinese belongs to the Sino-Tibetan language family and English belongs to the Indo-European one, the two languages cannot be translated by the strategy of repetition. The strategies used are shown in Table 3.

Number	Source Text	Target Text	Translation Strategies
1	yú zhàn áo 余占鳌	Yu Zhan'ao	Orthographic adaption
2	luò tāng jī 落汤鸡	drenched chickens	Linguistic translation
3	liú luó hàn 刘罗汉	Arhut Liu, named after Buddhist saints	Intra-textual gloss
4	jiāo zhuó de niú láng 焦灼的牛郎	the anxious Herd Boy(Altair)	Extra-textual gloss
5	cóng tiān guó chuán lái de yīn yuè 从天国传来的音乐 shēng tiān 升天	commanded from on <u>high</u> exist in <u>heaven</u>	Synonymy
6	niàn jīng 念经	chant a sutra	Limited universalisation
7	huā róng yuè mào 花容月貌	beautiful	Absolute universalisation
8	huā huā shì ér 花花事儿	sowed plenty of wild oats	Naturalisation
9	gòng chǎn dǎng 共产党	No-translation	Deletion
10	lǎo tiān yé 老天爷	Old Man in heaven	Autonomous creation

Table 3 Translation Strategies Employed in the Translation of CSIs

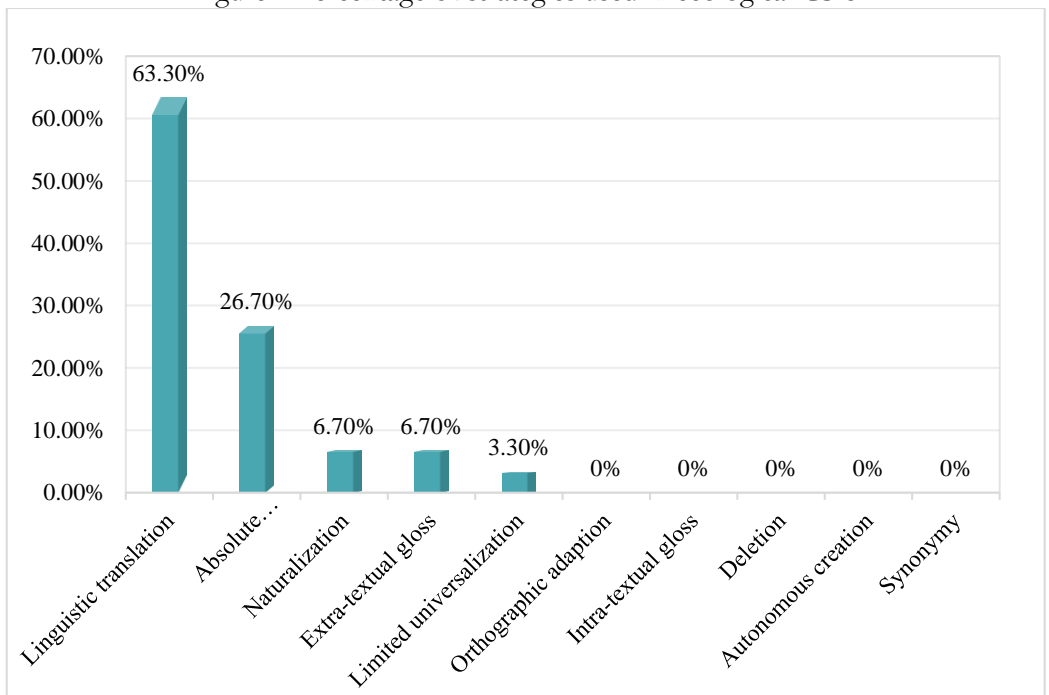
Translation requires the use of multiple strategies to effectively convey the nuances of meaning, style, and form of the original text. The main translation strategies used through data analysis include orthographic adaption, linguistic

translation, intra-textual gloss and extra-textual gloss, synonymy, limited universalisation, absolute universalisation, naturalisation, deletion, and autonomous creation. Each strategy has a certain function and purpose to ensure better intercultural communication.

Orthographic adaption

Based on Nida's taxonomy, this study calculated the frequency and percentage of culture-specific items under each classification, and Figure 1 shows the percentage of strategies employed in ecological CSIs:

Figure 1 Percentage of strategies used in ecological CSIs

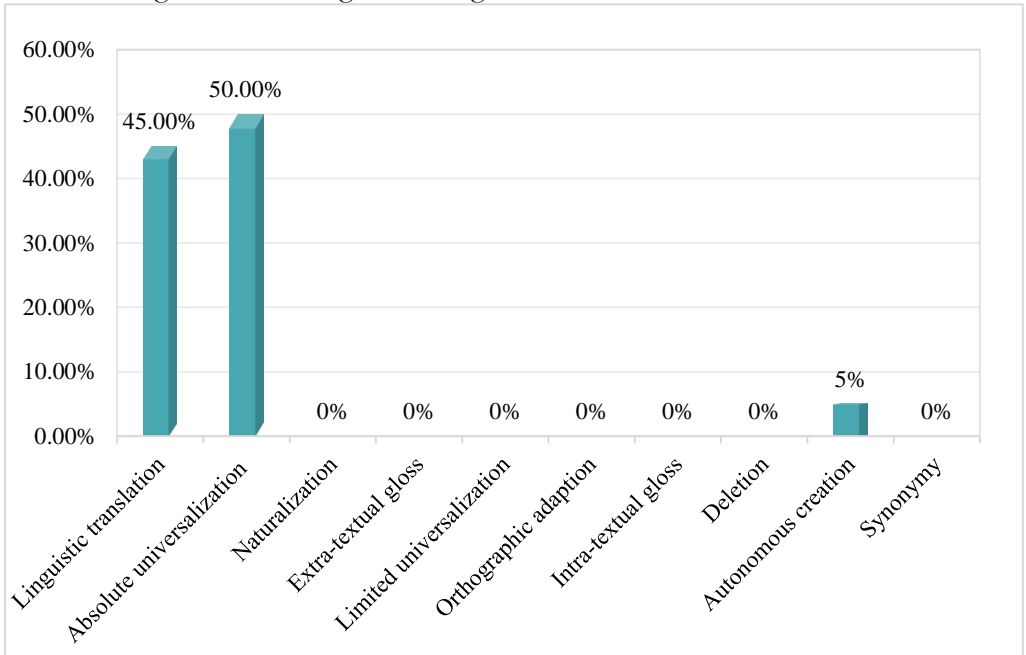


An analysis of the translation strategies used for ecological CSIs shows that linguistic translation predominates, accounting for 63.3% of the total number of strategies used. This suggests a heavy reliance on conveying the meaning and essence of these items through linguistic equivalence. In addition, 26.7% of the translations employed absolute universalisation, which indicates that translators use a wider range of universally understandable terminology in their translations, but the cultural specificity of the source language may be lost.

Extra-textual gloss and naturalisation strategies each accounted for 6.7%. These methods help to preserve the original cultural context and make the

content more accessible to the audience. The limited generalisation strategies was used in only 3.3% of the cases, which suggests that such strategies were used relatively infrequently. Orthographic adaption, intra-textual gloss, synonymy, deletion, and autonomous creation were not used among the translation strategies analyzed, suggesting that these methods are less appropriate or less applicable when dealing with specific ecological CSIs.

Figure 2 Percentage of strategies used in material CSIs

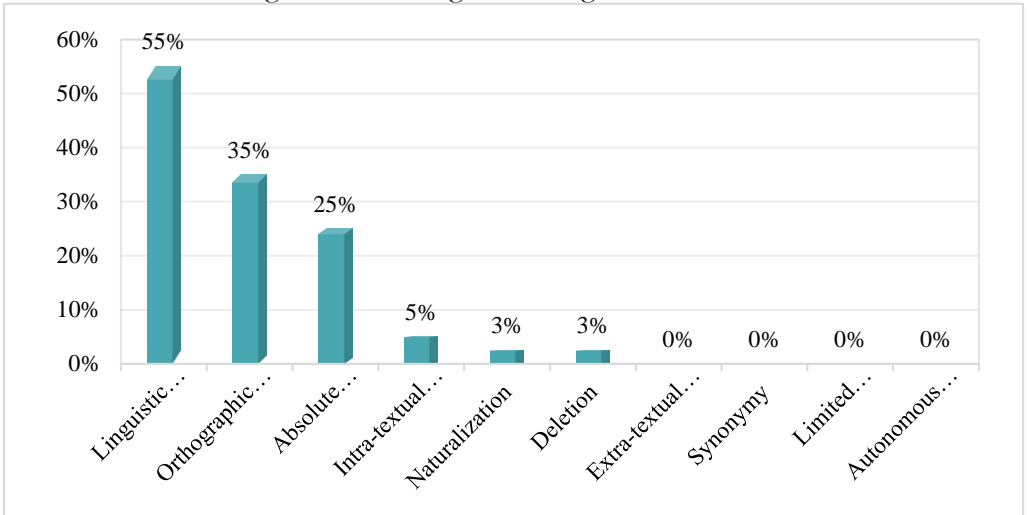


An analysis of the translation strategies used for material culture-specific projects shows that absolute generalisation is used extensively, accounting for 50 per cent of the strategies employed. The prevalence of absolute generalisation suggests that translators are trying to make the original text generally comprehensible to the reader. In addition, linguistic translation accounted for 45% of the total number of strategies used, emphasising the importance of conveying the meaning of specific items of material culture through linguistic equivalence, where the translator tries to maintain equivalence between the original and the translated text. Autonomous creation accounted for 5% of the total number of strategies used, indicating a small but present tendency to produce entirely new content in the target language. This strategy can be used when direct translation fails to capture the essence or when there is a lack of cultural equivalents in the target language.

The absence of other strategies such as intra-textual gloss, extra-textual gloss, naturalisation, limited generalisation, orthographic adaption, synonymy,

and deletion suggests that these methods are inappropriate when dealing with specific items of material culture.

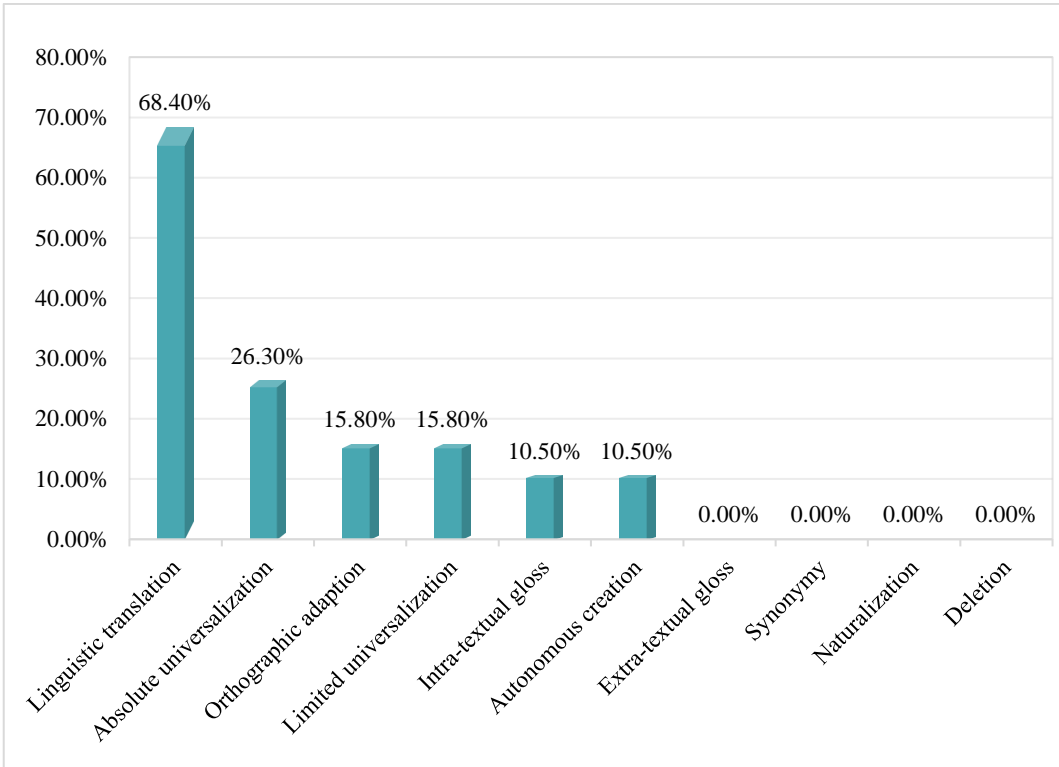
Figure 3 Percentage of strategies used in social CSIs



A study of the translation strategies used for social CSIs shows that linguistic translation predominates, accounting for 55% of the total number of strategies used. This suggests that sociocultural translation can be better achieved through linguistic equivalence, ensuring that the contextual and social meaning of these items is captured in the target language.

This is closely followed by orthographic adaption with a 35% usage rate, a method in which some social CSIs are missing in the target language, and through transliteration can bring the reader closer to the source language culture. Absolute generalisation, intra-textual gloss, deletion, and naturalisation accounted for a smaller percentage. This indicates that translations are made more understandable to readers by providing explanatory vocabulary within the text to make it more acceptable to readers in the target culture. Extra-textual gloss, synonymy, limited generalisation and autonomous creation were not used in the translations of the social CSIs. This suggests that these methods may not be appropriate. The complexity of social CSIs requires translators to focus on linguistic fidelity rather than making extensive revisions.

Figure 4 Percentage of strategies used in religious CSIs

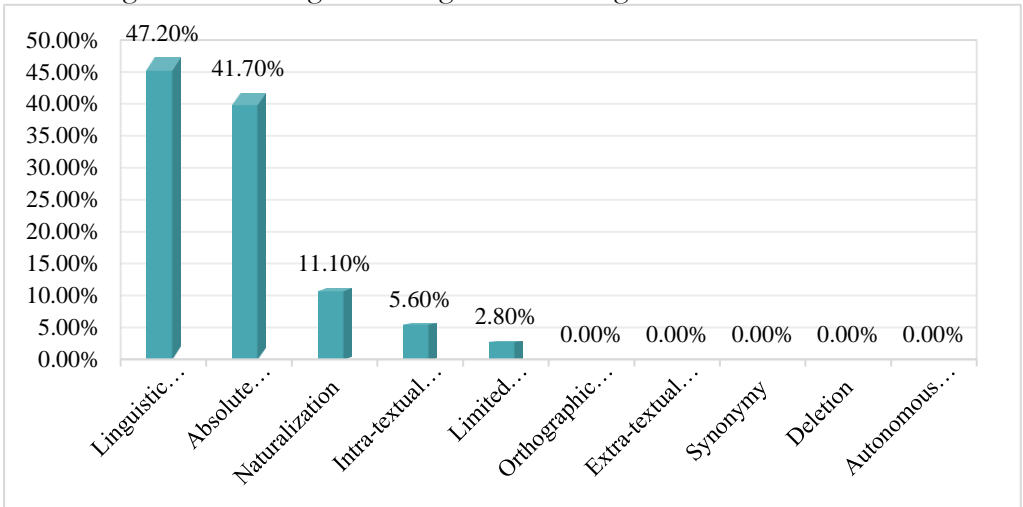


The analysis of the translation strategies used for religious culture-specific projects demonstrates the variety of methods used in the translation process. Linguistic translation accounts for the highest percentage, at 68.4%. This strategy preserves the essence and cultural significance of religious elements in the source culture and ensures the specificity and sacredness of religious terminology. Absolute generalisation, at 26.3% and used in more than a quarter of the data, is a strategy that helps to make the original text comprehensible to a wider range of people and proactively accessible to religious messages, ensuring that key religious concepts are accessible and understandable to a wider audience.

Orthographic adaption and limited generalisation each accounted for 15.8% of the data, suggesting that some CSIs are specific to China. Translators use these two strategies in order to preserve the exotic flavor and characteristics of the original text, while minimising the reader's reading difficulty through limited generalisation. Autonomous creation and intra-textual gloss, both of which accounted for 10.5%, provide in-text explanations to facilitate better communication of religious culture-specific items. Some religious concepts may not have direct equivalents and sometimes require creative translation or additional information from the translator to explain them and to help

understand very specialised religious terminology. The absence of the use of Extra-textual gloss, synonymy, naturalisation and deletion in the translation of religious culture-specific items suggests that these strategies are not appropriate when dealing with content with sacred and specific meanings in religious contexts and may alter the intended religious message.

Figure 5 Percentage of strategies used in linguistic CSIs



The analysis of the translation strategies used in the language and culture specific projects shows that there is a wide variety of methods used in the translation process. Linguistic translation was the most commonly used strategy, accounting for 47.2% of all strategies. Given the highly specific nature of linguistic and cultural words and their relevance to culture, linguistic accuracy is essential to retain the intended linguistic connotations and meanings.

Absolute generalisation is the second most common strategy, accounting for 41.7% of the total, and it ensures that these linguistic terms are more widely understood by readers while retaining their core linguistic concepts and meanings. Naturalisation, at 11.1%, helps make the translated text more familiar or acceptable in the target culture. Intra-textual gloss accounted for 5.6% and limited universalisation for 2.8%. This indicates that while maintaining the essential linguistic and cultural specificity of its source language, certain linguistic terms are partially explained or more familiar terms to the reader are used in the text for the sake of better comprehension by the reader so that a wider audience can partially understand it. The fact that extra-textual gloss, synonymy, deletion, autonomous creation, and orthographic adaption were not used in the translation of linguistic and culturally specific items suggests that these strategies may not be

appropriate or commonly used when dealing with CSIs that are deeply rooted in the linguistic complexity of a particular culture.

The results of the data analysis show that functionalist theory is applicable to the analysis of the data in this study, especially in the context of literary translation, where its rules of purpose, fidelity and coherence are well suited to guide the analysis of the data. However, the analysis also revealed clear violations of the aesthetic rules within the functionalist framework.

The rule of purpose is a key element of functionalist translation theory, which coincides with the findings and emphasises the need for translations to conform to the intended purpose. In the data analysis, the purpose rule allowed for translation to be completed according to the communicative goals of the target context. The rule of fidelity is also supported in the research findings, which emphasises the importance of being faithful to the original text while also taking into account the communicative function. In data analysis, the rule ensures the accuracy and completeness of the original text. The coherence rule complements the findings by emphasising that translations must be structurally coherent and contextually meaningful.

At the same time the analyses show that the functionalist approach to translation clearly deviates from the aesthetic rule. The functionalist perspective prioritises communicative effect and purpose over strict adherence to traditional aesthetic preferences. This deviation leads to translations that sometimes violate traditional aesthetic standards. For example, if the translation is beautiful, although the translation effectively conveys the intended message and meaning, it lacks the more beautiful flower-like imagery of the original. This deviation from aesthetic norms can lead to a greater focus on functional relevance and a neglect of the elegance or stylistic features that characterise literary translations.

This finding emphasises the need to strike a balance between achieving communicative goals and maintaining aesthetic qualities, especially when dealing with literary translations, as one of the most important functions of literature is to cultivate the reader's sensibilities and elicit literary beauty. Whilst the functionalist approach is very effective in ensuring communication, the two aspects of effective communication and aesthetic appeal in literary translation need to be harmoniously combined in order to fulfil the aesthetic needs of the reader. Therefore, after analysing the data, the findings of this study demonstrate the need for a fourth aesthetic principle in literary translation to complement the functional theory and promote a better development of the theory, as shown in Table 4 below:

Table 4 The Development of Functionalist Approaches

Functionalist Approaches	Katharina Reiss (1971)	Hans J. Vermeer (1978)	Justa Holz-Manttari (1981)	Christiane Nord (1997)	The authors
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	Functional Category	Skopos Theory	Translational action	Function plus loyalty	Aesthetic rule
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Wishing iron could turn into steel (恨铁不成钢, Hèn tiě bùchéng gāng) is a unique expression in Chinese. It is used to describe feeling dissatisfied with the expected person who is not ambitious. The translator has adopted a free translation method, and the reader can better understand part of the original text, but the charm of the original text has disappeared.

Conclusion

This paper provides insights into the challenges of translating culturally specific items (CSIs) from Chinese to English in Mo Yan's novel *Red Sorghum*, particularly the challenges inherent in bridging cultural differences and faithfully conveying the rich cultural context to readers, as well as the translation strategies adopted to face these challenges, and explores the application of functionalist theory to this translation. This study adopts a qualitative research design to analyze the translation strategies used for different categories of culture-specific items (CSIs) and the frequency of their application. It draws on Aixelá's classification of translation strategies and Nida's taxonomy of CSIs, all within the framework of functionalist theory. In addition, the study also outlines the development of functionalist theory over time, which highlights existing theoretical gaps, noting that while functionalist theory is widely applied, it still requires further development to address evolving research needs.

The results of the study demonstrate the various translation strategies used when dealing with CSI in *Red Sorghum*, such as orthographic adjustment, linguistic translation, lexis, limited and absolute universalisation, naturalisation, deletion, and autonomous creation. The results showed that linguistic translation was the dominant strategy in all categories of CSI, highlighting the importance of preserving the linguistic meaning of the original text. Absolute universalisation was also significantly used, indicating that at the cost of losing some of the cultural specificity of the translated text, translators endeavoured to make the text more accessible to a wider audience. Secondly, the results also showed that the frequency of the use of these strategies varies across different types of CSI, meaning that categorisation affects the choice of translation strategies. Finally, the results also found that the application of functionalist theory effectively guided translation strategies, especially in terms of adherence to purpose, fidelity, and coherence in the translation process. However, this study also identified a potential limitation in the application of the functionalist approach: the lack of emphasis on aesthetic qualities in the translation process. Functionalism

emphasises adherence to the principles of purpose, fidelity, and coherence, but it may neglect the stylistic and aesthetic nature of the original text.

The theoretical significance of this study is that it promotes the development of functionalist theory, emphasises the need to observe aesthetic principle in literary translation in addition to the principles of purpose, fidelity and coherence, and stresses the importance of balancing communicative efficiency and maintaining aesthetic qualities in literary translation. The practical significance of this study lies in the fact that it greatly contributes to the understanding of translating culturally specific items, and the analysis of translation strategies and the application of functionalist theories provide valuable insights into effective intercultural communication.

One of the limitations of the study is that the scope of the study only covers the analysis of *Red Sorghum*, which may not be fully representative of the various challenges encountered when translating different literary works. Future research could consider expanding the scope of analysis to other literary works or genres. In addition, studies of readers' reception and perception of translated texts can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of translation in communicating to the target audience. Future research could also build on this study by examining the application of aesthetic principles in literary translation.

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