

A Research on the Translation and Dissemination of Ceramic Culture Based on Live Stream

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Abstract: While China boasts a long history and rich cultural connotations, its cultural output started relatively late compared with the developed Western countries. Therefore, China is now in urgent need of effective channels to narrate Chinese stories, voice Chinese perspectives, and spread Chinese Culture. Ceramics, as a significant aspect of Chinese culture, coupled with the modern platform of live stream, can undoubtedly serve as a powerful tool for the spreading of Chinese culture. However, ceramic translation stands as a critical issue in ceramic live stream, and the effectiveness of ceramic translation is relevant to the disseminating quality of ceramic culture. This paper takes ceramic live stream as its research subject. It first studies the function of ceramic live stream and then explores how to use domestication and foreignization to translate Chinese ceramic works titles, decorations, types, figures, places and inscriptions in live stream, so as to achieve the goal of disseminating Chinese ceramic culture.

1. Introduction

The strategy of “Chinese Culture Going Global” urgently requires China to tell Chinese stories, voice Chinese perspectives, and disseminate Chinese culture. China is home to numerous outstanding traditional cultures, and there are countless beautiful cultural stories that are worthy of dissemination and promotion. However, despite the continuous rise of China’s comprehensive strength, there still exists a gap between China and many long-established Western countries in terms of cultural output. Many well-known brands and cultures, including Hollywood, Disney, fast food culture, luxury brand culture, and so on, all attest to the tremendous success achieved by Western countries in cultural output [1]. As one of the four ancient civilizations, China should leverage its rich cultural heritage as its foundation and utilize modern channels to develop culture-spreading approaches exclusive to China. Ceramics, as an important component of the traditional Chinese culture, have stood the test of time [2]. With the help of the flourishing live stream industry, ceramic live stream will contribute to the spreading of Chinese culture.

2. The Live Stream Industry and Chinese Ceramic Live Stream

The origin of online live stream can be traced back to 1996 when Jennifer Ringley, then just 19

years old, utilized the webcam on her dormitory computer to broadcast live, creating the first online live stream website called Jennicam [3]. In China, the “Stay-at-home Economy” emerged in the public in 2020, giving birth to the booming live stream economy with “selling goods through live stream” as its core. Countless Chinese platforms and steamers have flooded into this industry, introducing live stream to millions of Chinese people. Today, Chinese live stream platforms have become an indispensable part of many people’s lives, serving purposes from selling, socializing, entertaining, to even learning and working. It can be said that live stream has replaced some old-fashioned industries such as radio broadcasting in many aspects and provided new access to the latest hot spots for people [4].

As China is the origin of ceramics, unlike other places, China’s ceramic live stream focuses on the techniques of ceramic production, decoration and the traditional Chinese culture associated with ceramics. Some of the process of live stream has become vivid ceramic-themed classes, conveying to buyers the openness, inclusiveness, diligence, and wisdom nurtured from ceramics. In the past, every nation believes that ceramics made in China were excellent, but they didn’t know “what makes them good,” “why they are good,” and “how to judge their quality.” Through ceramic live stream, this issue can be effectively addressed. Buyers, sellers, and experts can communicate face-to-face through the screen, and other viewers can also learn from it. Leveraging the large audience and of the live stream industry, ceramic culture, and even Chinese culture, can be spread far and wide.

3. Translation and Dissemination of Chinese Ceramic Culture through Live Stream

International live stream is not only an integral part of ceramic live stream but also a crucial aspect of promoting Chinese culture. Nowadays, international trade is developing unprecedentedly, and the global economy has become a topic of common concern for all countries [5]. Therefore, ceramic live stream must adapt to this trend and showcase the beauty and culture of Chinese ceramics to the world. In ceramic translation, domestication and foreignization are vital translation strategies [6]. On the one hand, domestication can help audiences better understand ceramic and Chinese culture; on the other hand, foreignization can help Chinese culture resonate more deeply with people, allowing culture to truly “go global.”

3.1 Domestication and Foreignization Strategies

In the field of translation, domestication and foreignization are two important concepts used to describe two different strategies for handling the relationship between the source language and the target language in the translation process [7]. Domestication refers to making the expression of the source language more closely resemble the speaking habits and cultural background of the target language, making the translation easier for the target readers to understand [8]. Foreignization, on the other hand, refers to maintaining the stylistic features of the source language as much as possible and avoiding changing the expression of the source language, so that the target readers can feel the style and characteristics of the source language through the text, achieving a kind of “exotic” translation effect [9].

3.2 Domestication in Ceramic Live Stream

3.2.1 Domestication for the Translation of Ceramic Works Titles

In the process of ceramic live stream, considering that most viewers do not have a systematic and in-depth study of ceramics, the names of Chinese ceramics are sometimes more than baffling.

Streamers do not have enough time to provide detailed, systematic introductions to the titles of each piece of work as one would in academic research. Instead, their focus would be mainly on the features and characteristics. However, when it comes to Chinese ceramics, their titles play a very important role and should by no means be overlooked. Through titles, people can understand their types, such as famille rose, blue and white, blue and red, and celadon; their shapes, such as jars, vases, and bowls; their decorations, such as interlocking branches, peonies, and lotuses; and their functions, such as brush washers, narcissus basins, and pen holders [10]. Therefore, for the translation of ceramic titles in live stream, it is advisable to follow the strategy of domestication by adhering to the expression habits of the target language and laying emphasis on main features. By doing so, understanding the titles of ceramic works will be easier for viewers and much time will be saved. Examples can be shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Domestic translation of ceramic works titles

Examples	Chinese Works Titles	Domestic Translation
1	<i>Qing Hua Niao Shi Guan</i>	Blue and White Jar to Store Bird Food
2	<i>Qing Hua Shi Xi Qiu Dun</i>	Blue and White Garden Seat with Design Showing Lion Sporting with Ball

Example 1 is translated into “blue and white jar to store bird food” instead of “blue and white bird food jar.” In Chinese, “blue and white” refers to the type of this work. The function of this work is to food for birds, and the shape of the vessel is a jar. Considering that if it is translated as “blue and white bird food jar,” it may be misunderstood as a food-feeding jar for birds by viewers. So the translator should adhere to the strategy of domestication and it should be translated into “jar to store bird food.”

Example 2 is used to describe a scene where lions are playing with balls. However, it may be misunderstood as a ball that lions like to play with. As for the shape of the work, in Chinese it refers to a stone seat. Therefore, it can be translated into “blue and white garden seat with design showing lion sporting with ball”, following the guidance of domestication.

3.2.2 Domestication for the Translation of Ceramic Decorations

As mentioned earlier, many live stream viewers are not equipped with enough background knowledge of ceramics, especially for those who are unfamiliar with Chinese culture, making it impossible to summarize all details of ceramics with one jargon, especially regarding ceramic decorations. With a wide variety and multiple elements, the traditional Chinese decorations include innumerable cultural connotations that would take ages to explain. However, the time of live stream is extremely limited and valuable. Therefore, the translator must try their utmost to explain the true meaning of those decorations in the fewest words possible and also avoid a word-to-word translation. Under this circumstance, the strategy of domestication would be of great help. Examples can be shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Domestic translation of ceramic decorations

Examples	Chinese Decorations	Domestic Translation
3	<i>Ba Ji Xiang</i>	Eight Lucky Emblems of the Buddhists
4	<i>Ba Xian</i>	Eight Taoist Immortals
5	<i>Ba Bao</i>	The Eight Ordinary Symbols of Happiness

Example 3 should be translated into “Eight Lucky Emblems of the Buddhists.” Over the course of live stream, a word-to-word translation like “Eight Happiness” may seem ineffective. On the one hand, a mere jargon “Eight Happiness” would convey no information to viewers who have never seen this decoration before. On the other hand, for those who have seen this decoration before, this

translation is insufficient to demonstrate its cultural connotations of Buddhism and the wish of a good luck. Therefore, domestication can be employed to add additional words, “lucky” and “Buddhist,” to facilitate understanding and cultural spreading.

Example 4 should be translated into “Eight Taoist Immortals.” In China, the concept of “Eight Taoist Immortals” is well known to all and everyone knows they belong to Taoism. A literal translation like “Eight gods” would fail to reflect its Taoist characteristics. However, sometimes “Eight Taoist Immortals” refer to their eight emblems, including fan, sword, gourd, castanet, flower-basket, bamboo tube, flute, and lotus. In this case, “Eight Taoist Immortals” should be transmitted into “Eight Emblems of the Eight Taoist Immortals.” Likewise, when it comes to Example 5, it should not be translated in a word-to-word way. Instead of “Eight Treasures”, it should be called “The Eight Ordinary Symbols of Happiness.”

3.2.3 Domestication for the Translation of Ceramic Types

The type of ceramics is diverse and each has its own distinct characteristics, which is beneficial for ceramic appreciation. However, for ceramic live stream, the challenge lies in how to help viewers distinguish these different types from each other quickly and effectively. If all types are translated based on their Chinese names, the burden of memorization would be too heavy for foreign viewers. Luckily, Chinese ceramics have long been interacting with the culture of various countries around the world, and during this process of exchange and trade, other countries have formed fixed terms for some ceramic types. In the process of live stream, if there is already a fixed term for one type of porcelain, the translator should follow the strategy of domestication and use terms that the viewers are familiar with instead of creating a new name for it.

A typical example can be the name of “celadon”. In the late 16th century, in the novel *L'Astrée* by the French writer Honoré d'Urfé, there was a shepherd named “Céladon” who wore a green costume while performing on stage. Later, when people outside China first saw celadon, they were impressed by its lustrous green color and immediately associated it with the color of Céladon’s costume. As a result, the term “celadon” was fixed. In ceramic live stream translation, “celadon” can be directly used instead of “blue porcelain” to facilitate understanding. By doing so, even those who are unfamiliar with “celadon” can distinguish this type of porcelain from others and thus the conveyance of information in live stream would be more effective.

Similarly, in live stream translation, “blue and white” can be employed for better acceptance by the audience. By the 17th century’s commencement, Chinese blue and white porcelain found its way directly into Europe. During the 17th and 18th centuries, it was highly prized in Europe and was coveted by people from citizens to kings. Some extremely precious ones would even be mounted with exquisite silver and gold decorations. All these facts vindicate that the name “blue and white” is universally recognized and can be used without hesitation.

3.3 Foreignization in Ceramic Live Stream

As part of cultural spreading, ceramic live steaming should also embody Chinese characteristics, promote Chinese culture, and convey the Chinese spirit. Therefore, foreignization translation, as a translation strategy that reflects the characteristics and culture of the source language, is also indispensable.

3.3.1 Foreignization for the Translation of Figures on Ceramics

In ceramic decorations, figurative motifs are very common. Many ceramic works depict renowned legendary stories or stories of famous figures, or depict famous mountains and rivers accompanied by poetry. Considering the limited duration of live stream, streamers cannot introduce

every figure in detail with scholarly references. However, as a crucial element of ceramic decorations, these figures are significant cultural symbols for cultural output and should not be ignored. Therefore, it is advisable to adhere to the strategy of foreignization for the translation of their names, as is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Foreignization translation of figures on ceramics

Examples	Figures on Ceramics	Domestic translation	Foreignization translation
6	<i>Li Bai</i>	White Li	Li Bai
7	<i>Qu Yuan</i>	Yuan Qu	Qu Yuan
8	<i>Lao Zi</i>	Zi Lao	Lao Zi

China is no longer the same as before, and names with distinctive Chinese characteristics should reflect the characteristics of Chinese culture. During live stream, hundreds of thousands of people are currently using a platform worldwide, and the way people translate also reflect their attitude and view toward the world. The translation of Chinese names should also demonstrate China's confidence and willingness to share its culture with other countries. This adherence to foreignization will also help China create its own cultural symbols. Just like when we talk about Mickey Mouse, Disney will cross our mind. When we talk about a Chinese hero, people will be thinking of the integrity and devotion of him.

What's more, most of the figures on ceramic works are coordinated with other decorations to form a complete allusion or story. Through the introduction in live stream, supplemented by the foreignization translation of the names, audiences can have a deeper impression of traditional Chinese stories and figures, thereby promoting the dissemination of Chinese culture and making "Chinese stories" known to all even overseas.

3.3.2 Foreignization for the Translation of Places

In the process of ceramic live stream, the introduction of places is inevitable and hard to deal with. What's more, there are materials that are named after Chinese mountains or places, so it seems more appropriate to use foreignization translation strategy. After all, the correctness of translation is vital for live stream as a channel of cultural spreading. Although the name of some places could be hard to understand for foreigners, it is impossible to explain the history and meaning of some Chinese places to the viewers in the time-limited live stream. Therefore, transliterating the places by following the strategy of foreignization is more preferable.

For another, to spread Chinese culture to a larger extent, the names of those places must be deeply planted into viewers' mind. These place names belong uniquely to China, and using foreignization can make the audience better aware that these ceramics and regions come from China, hence promoting the rooting and germination of ceramic and Chinese culture in the minds of foreigners.

3.3.3 Foreignization for the Translation of Inscriptions

The issue of counterfeit products has always been prevalent in the live stream industry. For ceramic live stream, it has a crucial "identity card": inscriptions. Inscriptions play a crucial role in identifying the authenticity and dating of ceramics. Therefore, in ceramic live stream, this important information should be translated by using foreignization to ensure an accurate description of the inscriptions. By doing so, various information contained in the inscriptions will not be overlooked, and the audience can also obtain some additional information.

For example, inscriptions of different reign titles should be translated by the transliteration,

which is a method of foreignization. Through the foreignization of these reign titles, the content of the inscriptions can be recounted without omission, and viewers can better understand the differences between various reigns in China, thereby gaining clearer insight into China's long and complicated network of history.

4. Conclusion

Ceramic live stream, combining the profound culture of ceramics, can effectively spread ceramic and Chinese culture. This unique form of live stream with Chinese characteristics can step onto the world stage, allowing audiences to understand and absorb the splendid Chinese culture. Appropriately applying the translation strategies of domestication and foreignization during the live stream process can serve as a catalyst for this process of cultural output. It ensures that the live content not only conforms to the culture and customs of the target language but also conveys the essence and temperament of Chinese culture.

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