



A Study on the English Translation of Chinese Numerical Idioms from the Perspective of Semantic and Communicative Translation Theory

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Abstract

From the perspective of semantic and communicative translation theory, this paper analyzes the semantic features, cultural connotations, translation difficulties, and practical translation methods of Chinese numerical idioms. On the basis of Newmark's distinction between semantic translation and communicative translation, the paper proposes that the English translation of numerical idioms should not rely mechanically on either literal transfer or free rendering. Instead, translators should first judge whether the numeral in a given idiom is literal, figurative, culturally loaded, or context-dependent, and then select a method that can balance semantic accuracy, cultural transmission, and target-reader acceptance. The study further discusses six translation methods, namely literal translation, idiomatic borrowing, free translation, amplification, omission, and variation, through illustrative examples. It concludes that semantic and communicative translation should be applied flexibly according to the idiom's literal meaning, figurative meaning, cultural load, rhetorical effect, and communicative context.

Subject Areas

Linguistics

Keywords

Numerical Idioms, Semantic Translation, Communicative Translation, Translation Strategies

1. Introduction

Numerical idioms are an important part of the Chinese idiom system. They embody the unique expressions and national thinking of the Chinese language and are widely used in daily life and literary works. With the increasing frequency of cultural exchanges between China and other countries, the English translation of Chinese numerical idioms has gradually attracted attention in the field of translation studies. Translators often encounter difficulties such as vague meanings of numbers, dense cultural information, and conflicts between form and content.

Peter Newmark's theory of semantic translation and communicative translation provides a workable framework for solving these problems. Of the two different translation strategies, semantic translation is more oriented toward the semantic form and cultural features of the original text, while communicative translation is more suitable for the understanding habits of target language readers. The two complement each other and play a useful guiding role in handling the alternating literal and figurative meanings of numbers as well as the cultural allusions in numerical idioms.

Previous studies have discussed Chinese idiom translation, the symbolic or virtual meaning of numerals in idioms, and the cultural communication function of idiom translation. However, many discussions still tend to list translation methods separately, without explaining in operational terms how a translator should judge the role of the numeral before choosing a strategy. The contribution of this paper is therefore to connect Newmark's semantic and communicative translation theory with a practical decision process for Chinese numerical idioms. It distinguishes literal, figurative, culture-loaded, and context-dependent numerals, and then explains why different methods are closer to semantic translation, communicative translation, or a mixed strategy.

The idioms discussed in this paper are selected according to three principles. First, they are common Chinese numerical idioms frequently used in daily expression, literary discussion, dictionaries, teaching materials, or previous translation studies. Second, they represent different numeral functions, including literal counting, figurative exaggeration, cultural allusion, and pragmatic evaluation. Third, they can clearly illustrate different translation methods. In the following analysis, examples marked as "published examples" refer to idioms or renderings commonly found in dictionaries, teaching materials, or existing translation discussions, while examples marked as "self-constructed contexts" refer to short sentences designed by the author to demonstrate how context affects translation choice.

2. Overview of the Translation Theory

One of the core issues in translation theory is how to handle the relationship between the source language and the target language. Translators often face a dilemma: whether to remain faithful to the form and content of the original text or to give more consideration to the understanding habits of target language readers.

The traditional debate between literal translation and free translation is a concentrated reflection of this issue, but a simple dichotomy cannot guide translators to handle specific situations flexibly.

As a well-known British translation theorist, Peter Newmark's theory has an important influence in Western translation studies. He believes that translation is not simply a matter of replacing one language with another, but rather selecting appropriate expressions on the basis of fully understanding the content, linguistic form, and cultural background of the original text [1]. Combining the functions and characteristics of different text types, Newmark proposed two translation strategies: semantic translation and communicative translation. Both go beyond the traditional debate between literal and free translation and provide more detailed guidance for translation practice.

Semantic translation aims to reproduce the contextual meaning of the original text as accurately as possible within the limits allowed by the target language's syntactic and semantic structures. It focuses on the original's thought process, the subtle differences in words, and its cultural coloring, striving to preserve the original's expression and style [2]. Therefore, the translator needs to bring the target language reader as close as possible to the original's linguistic and cultural world, preserving the original's semantic content and formal features as much as possible.

In contrast, communicative translation focuses on the understanding and acceptance of the target reader, emphasizing the fluency and readability of the translation, and striving to achieve an effect as close as possible to that produced by the original in its source language culture. Newmark emphasizes that communicative translation allows translators to adjust and explain the original text, paying more attention to the understanding and reaction of the target reader [2]. That is, the translator can appropriately modify the logic, modifiers, or even cultural images of the original text, turning obscure or culturally specific terms into expressions familiar to general target language readers, thereby eliminating reading barriers.

In summary, semantic translation and communicative translation are not opposites but rather two strategic orientations on a continuum. Translators choose and match them flexibly according to their translation purpose and the characteristics of the text. This theory provides explanatory power for the translation of culture-loaded words and offers an analytical framework for the English translation of Chinese numerical idioms [3].

3. Characteristics of Numerical Idioms

Chinese numerical idioms are a special group of fixed expressions in the Chinese idiom system. They usually contain one or more numerals and express meanings through the combination of numerical forms and idiomatic structures. In such idioms, numerals do not always function as exact numbers. Previous studies have pointed out that numerals in idioms may have literal meanings, figurative meanings, or fuzzy semantic functions. Wang argues that Chinese idioms containing numerals show flexibility and diversity, and that the understanding and transla-

tion of such idioms should take into account both the literal reference and the fuzziness of numerals as well as their cultural implications [4]. Hu also notes that in Chinese four-character numerical idioms, some numerals express literal meanings, some express figurative meanings, and some may gradually shift from literal meanings to figurative meanings in long-term use [5]. Peng's discussion of the virtual meanings of numerals in English and Chinese idioms also shows that numerals in idioms often go beyond literal quantity and acquire idiomatic meanings [6]. Therefore, understanding the characteristics of numerical idioms is a necessary basis for discussing their English translation.

3.1. Structural Characteristics

From the structural perspective, many Chinese numerical idioms appear in the form of four-character expressions. This compact structure makes them concise, rhythmic, and easy to remember. Once a numeral enters an idiom, its position and collocation usually become relatively fixed. For example, "Sanxineryi" cannot normally be changed into "Erxinsanyi", and "Qishangbaxia" cannot be changed into "Bashangqixia". This shows that the numeral in an idiom is not a freely replaceable element, but part of a fixed idiomatic structure.

However, it is necessary to avoid making unsupported statistical claims about the frequency of particular numerals. The present paper does not conduct a corpus-based frequency analysis, so it does not claim that one numeral appears more frequently than another. It can only be observed from common examples that numerals such as "Yi", "San", "Liang", "Qi", "Ba", "Qian", and "Wan" often appear in Chinese numerical idioms, as in "Yijianshuangdiao", "Sanxineryi", "Qishangbaxia", "Qianxinwanku", and "Wanwuyishi". These examples suggest that numerals may participate in relatively stable idiomatic patterns, but their exact frequency should be verified through corpus research.

3.2. Semantic Characteristics

The most important semantic characteristic of numerical idioms is the coexistence of literal and figurative meanings. Literal numerals refer to actual and relatively definite quantities. For example, in "Yijianshuangdiao", "Yi" and "Shuang" correspond to "one arrow" and "two eagles"; in "Sangumaolu", "San" refers to the three visits in the historical story. Wang points out that when numerals in idioms express actual numbers, translators should understand them as definite quantities and try to reflect the numerical meaning in translation [4].

In contrast, many numerals in idioms are not used to express exact quantities. They are figurative, fuzzy, or rhetorical. Wang emphasizes that numerals in many Chinese idioms have fuzzy semantic boundaries and may even have little direct relation to the literal quantity [4]. For instance, in "Sanxineryi", "San" and "Er" do not mean three hearts and two intentions literally, but indicate hesitation and lack of concentration. In "Luanqibazao", "Qi" and "Ba" are not exact numbers, but help express disorder and confusion. In "Qianxinwanku", "Qian" and "Wan"

are not literal thousands and ten thousands, but indicate a high degree of hardship. This semantic fuzziness is also discussed in studies of English and Chinese numerical idioms, which show that numerals in idioms often go beyond literal quantity and acquire idiomatic meanings [6].

The same numeral may also have different meanings in different idioms. For example, “San” in “Sangumaolu” is closely related to an actual number in the original allusion, while “San” in “Sanlingwushen” suggests repeated orders, and “San” in “Sanyanliangyu” indicates a small number of words. Therefore, the translator should not decide the translation strategy only according to the surface numeral, but should first judge whether the numeral is literal, figurative, or context-dependent.

3.3. Cultural Characteristics

Numerical idioms often carry cultural information. Some numerals are connected with historical stories, traditional beliefs, or culturally specific images. For example, “Sangumaolu” is related to Liu Bei’s visits to Zhuge Liang, and “Simianchuge” is related to the historical story of Xiang Yu being surrounded. In such cases, the numeral is not merely a quantity marker, but part of a cultural image or an allusion.

At the same time, the cultural meaning of numerals should not be described as a fixed rule in every context. It is safer to say that certain numerals may carry symbolic or cultural associations in particular idioms and contexts. For example, “Ba” in “Baxianguo hai” is connected with the cultural image of the Eight Immortals; “San” and “Si” in “Sancongside” are related to traditional ethical concepts. Wang’s discussion of examples such as “Sancongside” and “Baxianguo hai” shows that even when numerals are translated literally, the cultural background behind them may still need explanation; otherwise, target readers may only understand the surface number but miss the cultural implication [4]. Studies on the cultural transmission of four-character idioms also emphasize that idioms often carry cultural meanings, and cultural differences make idiom translation a major difficulty [7].

This point is important for the application of semantic and communicative translation. When the cultural image is important, semantic translation may help preserve the original form and cultural flavor. However, if the cultural image is difficult for target readers to understand, communicative explanation or amplification may be necessary. Therefore, the cultural characteristic of numerical idioms lies not only in the presence of numbers, but also in the cultural associations attached to those numbers.

3.4. Rhetorical Characteristics

Numerals in idioms also have rhetorical functions. They can make expressions more concise, vivid, and rhythmic. Some numerical idioms use parallelism or contrast, such as “Qianyanwanyu” and “Qianxinwanku”; some use numerical pairing to strengthen rhythm, such as “Qishangbaxia” and “Luanqibazao”; others use nu-

merical contrast to highlight meaning, such as “Yijianshuangdiao” and “Jiuniuyimao”.

In many cases, the rhetorical function of numerals is more important than their literal quantity. For example, “Qian” and “Wan” in “Qianxinwanku” mainly strengthen the degree of hardship, while “Qi” and “Ba” in “Qishangbaxia” help create an image of disorder or uneasiness. Hu’s study of numerical idioms in *Selected Modern Chinese Essays Rendered into English* shows that translators may retain all numbers, retain part of the numbers, omit the numbers, or express them in a generalized way according to the rhetorical and communicative needs of the context [5]. This indicates that the rhetorical function of numerals is closely related to translation choice.

3.5. Pragmatic Characteristics

Numerical idioms are also context-dependent. The same idiom may perform different pragmatic functions in different sentences. For example, “Qishangbaxia” can describe a person’s nervous psychological state, but it can also describe a disorderly situation. “Sanyanliangyu” may indicate brevity in one context, while in another context it may appear in a negative expression such as “cannot be explained in a few words”. Therefore, the pragmatic meaning of a numerical idiom cannot be determined only by the idiom itself; it must be judged according to the sentence and communicative situation.

Hu’s analysis shows that in actual translation practice, translators often adjust the treatment of numerals according to context. For example, some idioms can keep their numerical form when the English expression is natural, while others need omission or generalized rendering when direct translation would sound redundant or confusing [5]. Wang also points out that when a numeral is used figuratively or fuzzily, translators should avoid being restricted by the surface form of the number and should focus more on the semantic and cultural function of the idiom [4]. Therefore, the pragmatic characteristic of numerical idioms requires translators to consider not only the literal meaning of numerals, but also the communicative purpose, the target reader’s understanding, and the specific context in which the idiom appears.

4. Translation Difficulties of Numerical Idioms

4.1. Difficulty in Distinguishing between Literal and Figurative Meanings

The primary difficulty in translating numerical idioms lies in determining the actual meaning of the numbers. Numbers in Chinese numerical idioms sometimes express concrete quantities and sometimes only figurative or symbolic meanings. Numerals in idioms often carry a strong degree of fuzziness, and their semantic reference often lies beyond the literal meaning [4]. For example, in the literal expression “Yijianshuangdiao”, “Yi” and “Shuang” have clear numerical values, which can be directly matched in translation. However, in the figurative expres-

sion “Sanxineryi”, “San” and “Er” no longer have their counting function. If directly translated as “three hearts and two minds”, the original meaning cannot be accurately conveyed. The same number can have different functions in different idioms. When translating, one must first determine the actual role of the number in the specific idiom, distinguishing between literal and figurative meanings; otherwise, the translation is likely to deviate from the original meaning.

4.2. Difficulty in Conveying Cultural Images

Many numerical idioms contain cultural and historical information unique to China, where numbers are combined with specific cultural backgrounds. There is often a significant gap between the literal meaning and the implied meaning of such idioms. Take “Simianchuge” as an example. This idiom not only indicates a state of isolation but also involves the historical allusion of Xiang Yu being surrounded. If directly translated as “four directions Chu songs”, English readers will find it difficult to understand its metaphorical meaning. If completely freely translated as “be surrounded by enemies on all sides”, the historical and cultural flavor of the original text is weakened. Translation must strike a balance between preserving cultural information and ensuring reader understanding. Similarly, “Sangumaolu” contains the cultural connotations of respecting the wise and sincerely seeking talent, while “Liushenwuzhu” involves traditional religious concepts. Word-for-word translation makes it very difficult to convey their meanings accurately.

4.3. Difficulty in Balancing Form and Meaning

Chinese numerical idioms are mostly compact phrases with neat structures and distinct rhythms, giving them a strong linguistic aesthetic. However, it is very difficult to find expressions in English that correspond perfectly in both form and meaning. Translating numerical idioms requires not only conveying the meaning but also paying attention to the artistic beauty of the form [8]. Overly retaining the original form may make the translation rigid, while completely abandoning the form may cause the loss of the original’s expressive features. For example, “Qianyanwanyu” uses the juxtaposition of “Qian” and “Wan” to highlight the abundance of words. If the numerical form is completely preserved, the translation may not conform to English usage. If only the basic meaning is expressed, the rhythm of the original text may be lost. Translators need to weigh the relationship between numerical form, idiom meaning, and translation fluency according to the specific context.

4.4. Influence of Context on Translation Choices

Numerical idioms are highly context-dependent in actual use. The same idiom may express different focuses in different contexts, and a fixed translation method should not be used. “Qishangbaxia” can describe both inner unease and the disorder of actions or states. A single translation can hardly cover the meanings in

all contexts. If the context is ignored and mechanical translation is carried out based only on dictionary definitions, it is easy to cause inaccurate expression or inappropriate tone. Translators need the ability to analyze the context, judge the actual meaning of the idiom according to the specific context, and choose a matching translation method.

5. English Translation of Numerical Idioms from the Perspective of Semantic and Communicative Translation

Semantic translation and communicative translation are not opposites in the English translation of numerical idioms, but rather complement each other. Semantic translation focuses on retaining the numerical form and cultural images of the original text, and is suitable for idioms where numbers have literal meanings or carry allusions. Communicative translation focuses on the understanding effect of the target language reader, and is suitable for idioms where numbers have been figurativized or where direct translation would cause cultural barriers. Both strategies aim to accurately convey the meaning of the idiom. The difference lies in the fact that semantic translation is closer to the source language culture, while communicative translation is closer to the target language reader. Translators should find a balance between the two according to the specific situation and flexibly allocate the two strategies.

For operational analysis, this paper uses the following criterion. If replacing or deleting the numeral changes the referential situation of the idiom, the numeral is treated as literal and semantic translation is usually preferred. If replacing or deleting the numeral does not change the core implication, and the numeral mainly expresses degree, exaggeration, rhythm, or evaluation, it is treated as figurative and communicative translation is usually preferred. If the numeral preserves both an image or allusion and a figurative meaning, the method is treated as mixed, because it needs both semantic retention and communicative explanation. Based on this approach, the following translation methods can be used in the English translation of numerical idioms.

5.1. Literal Translation

Literal translation retains the numerical form and basic structure of the original text without affecting understanding. It is suitable for numerical idioms where the numerical meaning is relatively clear and the cultural barrier is small. As long as it does not violate language rules or cause ambiguity, translators can use literal translation to convey the referential meaning of things and promote cultural exchanges between nations [9]. For example, “Yiguoliangzhi” can be translated as “one country, two systems”; “Yifenweier” can be translated as “one divides into two”. Such translations preserve the numerical relationships in the original text and convey the original meaning relatively accurately. “Sansanliangliang” can be translated as “in twos and threes”, “Simianbafang” as “in all directions”, and “Wuguangshise” as “bright with many colors”.

Published example: “Yiguoliangzhi” can be translated as “one country, two systems”. Self-constructed context: “This policy follows the principle of Yiguoliangzhi.” In this case, “one country, two systems” works better than “a unified country with different systems”, because the former has become a recognizable political expression and preserves the exact numerical relation. According to the operational criterion above, the numerals “one” and “two” are literal and cannot be omitted without changing the referential meaning. Therefore, this method is mainly semantic translation.

5.2. Idiomatic Borrowing

Idiomatic borrowing uses existing English idioms or fixed expressions to translate Chinese numerical idioms. Some Chinese and English expressions have different images but similar actual meanings [6]. For example, “Yijianshuangdiao” or “Yijuliangde” can be translated as “kill two birds with one stone”. This translation does not preserve the words “Yi” and “Shuang” one by one, but accurately conveys the meaning of “achieving two results with one action”. “Sansierhouxing” can also be translated as “look before you leap” according to the context, no longer retaining the numerical form but using an English idiom with a similar meaning to express the idea of acting cautiously. “Baiwenburuyijian” is translated as “seeing is believing”, abandoning the numerical contrast between “Bai” and “Yi” but retaining the core meaning that seeing in person is better than hearing indirectly. “Banjinbaliang” can be translated as “six of one and half a dozen of the other”, replacing the Chinese unit of measurement with an English one, achieving functional equivalence.

Published example: “Yijuliangde” can be translated as “kill two birds with one stone”. Self-constructed context: “The reform reduced costs and improved service quality, which was truly Yijuliangde.” Here, “kill two birds with one stone” works better than “one act brings two benefits” in ordinary communication, because it is a familiar English idiom and produces a natural target-language effect. Since the numerical form is adjusted to fit an English idiom, this method is mainly communicative translation, although it still preserves the general numerical contrast of one action and two results.

5.3. Free Translation

Free translation does not adhere to the original numbers and literal forms, but directly expresses the actual meaning of the idiom. It is suitable for idioms where the numerical meaning has been figurativized and literal translation would easily cause misunderstanding. Translation must convey the Chinese flavor while being acceptable to English readers [5]. If “Sanxineryi” is literally translated as “three hearts and two minds”, English readers would find it difficult to understand that it expresses indecision. It can be translated as “be half-hearted” or “be of two minds”. If “Qishangbaxia” is literally translated as “seven up and eight down”, it would be difficult to convey the psychological state of nervousness. It can be trans-

lated as “feel uneasy” or “be in a state of anxiety”. “Luanqibazao” can be translated as “in a mess” or “in disorder”. “Sanyanliangyu” can be translated as “in a few words”, highlighting the actual meaning of brief speech.

Published example: “Qishangbaxia” can be translated as “feel uneasy” or “be in a state of anxiety” when it describes a psychological state. Self-constructed context: “Before the interview, he felt Qishangbaxia.” In this sentence, “he felt uneasy” works better than “he felt seven up and eight down”, because the latter preserves the Chinese numbers but fails to convey the psychological state in idiomatic English. According to the operational criterion, “Qi” and “Ba” here do not refer to actual quantities, so communicative translation is preferred.

5.4. Amplification

Amplification is the addition of necessary information during translation to make the original meaning clearer [10]. Chinese numerical idioms often contain historical allusions or cultural backgrounds that English readers may not be familiar with. Appropriate amplification can reduce the difficulty of understanding. “Simianchuge” can be translated as “be surrounded by enemies on all sides, like Xiang Yu hearing Chu songs from every direction”. This translation not only conveys the meaning of isolation but also adds the historical background of Xiang Yu hearing Chu songs, helping English readers understand the origin of the idiom. “Sangumaolu” can be translated as “make three visits to the thatched cottage to invite a worthy person, showing great sincerity”. This translation retains the basic image of the idiom and explains the deeper meaning of sincerely inviting someone. “Liushenwuzhu” can be translated as “be completely at a loss, as if one had lost control of one’s senses”. “Jiujiuguiyi” can be translated as “all things eventually return to one origin, completing the cycle”.

Published example: “Sangumaolu” can be translated as “make three visits to the thatched cottage to invite a worthy person, showing great sincerity”. Self-constructed context: “The company invited the expert again and again, almost like Sangumaolu.” If the text is a cultural essay, “make three visits to the thatched cottage to invite a worthy person, showing great sincerity” works better than simply “invite someone sincerely”, because the amplified version preserves the cultural image and explains its implication. This is a mixed method: the image of “three visits” is semantically retained, while the explanation is added for communicative clarity.

5.5. Omission

Omission is the removal of numbers from the original text when they do not carry important cultural meanings, retaining only the core meaning of the idiom. The quality of idiom translation directly affects the quality of translation and the degree of cultural exchange [11]. Some numbers in Chinese numerical idioms mainly serve an exaggerated or emphatic function and do not need to be matched one by one in English. “Qianxinwanku” can be translated as “great hardships”. Although

“Qian” and “Wan” are not preserved, the word “great” already conveys the degree of hardship. “Qianfangbaiji” can be translated as “try every possible means”, omitting the numerical forms of “Qian” and “Bai”, but “every possible” already expresses the meaning of doing everything possible. “Wanwuyishi” can be translated as “perfectly safe” or “foolproof”. “Wuhuabamen” can be translated as “various” or “of all kinds”, omitting “Wu” and “Ba” but retaining the meaning of a wide variety.

Published example: “Qianxinwanku” can be translated as “great hardships”. Self-constructed context: “They finally overcame Qianxinwanku and completed the project.” In this context, “great hardships” works better than “a thousand hardships and ten thousand sufferings”, because the exact numerical images are not necessary for the communicative purpose of the sentence. Since the numerals mainly express exaggeration and degree, omission belongs mainly to communicative translation.

5.6. Variation

Variation is the flexible selection of translations according to the specific context, rather than the fixed use of a single translation method. The same numerical idiom may have different focuses in different situations, and the translator needs to choose a more appropriate translation based on the context. For example, “Qianpianyiyu” can be translated as “stereotyped writing” when evaluating an article, as “all in the same pattern” when describing a product lacking variation, and as “monotonous and repetitive” when emphasizing repetitive content. “Qishangbaxia” can be translated as “feel uneasy” when describing a psychological state and as “be in disorder” when describing a chaotic scene. “Yiqingerchu” can be translated as “perfectly clear” when something is easy to understand and as “make something clear” when emphasizing that someone has explained something clearly. “Sanyanliangyu” can be translated as “in a few words” when speech is brief and as “cannot be explained in a few words” when something cannot be expressed simply.

Published example: “Qishangbaxia” may be translated as either “feel uneasy” or “be in disorder” according to context. Self-constructed context: “The files on the desk were Qishangbaxia after the search.” Here, “the files were in disorder” works better than “he felt uneasy”, because the idiom describes the state of objects rather than a person’s emotion. In another sentence, “He waited for the result with a Qishangbaxia feeling,” “felt uneasy” is more suitable. Variation is therefore a context-based mixed method. It may lean toward semantic translation when the original image is meaningful in the context, but it may lean toward communicative translation when the pragmatic function is more important than the numerical form.

6. Conclusions

Using semantic translation and communicative translation theory as a frame-

work, this paper has analyzed the semantic features, cultural connotations and translation difficulties of Chinese numerical idioms, and discussed corresponding translation strategies. Semantic translation helps to preserve the formal features and cultural connotations of numerical idioms, while communicative translation helps to improve the naturalness and readability of the translation. Translators should flexibly choose and combine the two strategies according to the degree of literal or figurative meaning of the numbers, the cultural load of the idiom, and the specific context, finding a balance between preserving cultural characteristics and ensuring reader understanding.

The framework proposed in this paper also has certain limitations. First, translation choices may vary according to genre. A literary text may require more retention of cultural images, whereas a news report or business text may require clearer and more concise expression. Second, target readership matters. Readers with knowledge of Chinese culture may accept semantic translation more easily, while general readers may need communicative explanation. Third, translation purpose also affects the strategy. If the purpose is cultural introduction, amplification may be necessary; if the purpose is fast information transfer, omission or free translation may be more effective. Therefore, the six methods discussed in this paper should be regarded as flexible options rather than fixed rules.

This study may provide some reference for the English translation practice of Chinese numerical idioms and may also offer some inspiration for the translation study of other culture-loaded words. Future research may further build a corpus of numerical idiom translations, compare different genres and readerships, and test how readers respond to semantic, communicative, and mixed translations.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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