

A Study on Translation and Introduction of the Yellow River Culture from the Perspective of Geo-Translation Studies

—Take *The Yellow River Culture* in the Bilingual Series of “Chinese Civilisation: Stories from Henan” as an Example

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Abstract

The Yellow River culture is a significant component of Chinese culture. Its translation and introduction can enhance the global influence of Chinese culture and facilitate cultural exchange and interaction worldwide. This paper, based on *The Yellow River Culture* in the bilingual series of “Chinese Civilisation: Stories from Henan”, analyses the translator’s “topophilia” and translation strategies in the translation works related to the Yellow River culture from the perspective of Geo-translation Studies. Additionally, it explores how translators balance the dissemination of their native culture with the expectations of foreign readers during the translation process. This study aims to provide certain insights for the translation and introduction of the Yellow River culture and facilitate the global outreach of the Yellow River culture.

Keywords: *The Yellow River Culture*, Geo-translation Studies, translation and introduction of the Yellow River culture

1. Introduction

How to effectively tell the stories of Henan and China to the outside world is an important and urgent task of our times. External publicity translation undoubtedly serves as a crucial bridge for fostering mutual understanding between China and other nations. During his inspection tour of Henan in 2019, General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out, “The Yellow River culture is a vital component of Chinese civilisation and represents the root and soul of the Chinese nation. We must advance the systematic protection of the Yellow River’s cultural heritage and safeguard the precious legacy passed down to us by our ancestors. We should delve deeply into the contemporary values embedded within the Yellow River culture, tell the ‘Yellow River stories’ well, continue the historical thread, strengthen cultural confidence, and rally spiritual forces for the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation.” This instruction has provided clear guidance for the preservation and dissemination of the Yellow River culture.

In response to the national initiative and in strict compliance with the directives on preserving and promoting the Yellow River culture issued by the CPC Henan Provincial Committee and the People’s Government of Henan Province, Zhengzhou University has undertaken the critical task of compiling *The Yellow River Culture*, a key volume in the bilingual series of “Chinese Civilisation: Stories from Henan”. Through engaging narratives and accessible language, the book vividly portrays the Yellow River culture’s genesis, evolution, spiritual essence, and enduring legacy. However, the translation of Yellow River cultural works for cross-cultural communication faces numerous challenges, including cultural and linguistic disparities, as well as differences in target readers’ cognitive frameworks. From the perspective of Geo-translation Studies, this study examines the translation of Yellow River cultural works, using the English edition of *The Yellow River Culture* as a case study. It explores how to accurately convey meaning and cultural nuance in translation, facilitating the cross-cultural reinterpretation of these works in the English-speaking world. The aim is to enable international readers to gain a deeper understanding of the Yellow River culture and, by extension, Chinese civilisation through the translated text.

2. Overview of Geo-Translation Studies

Since the 21st century, the increasing interdisciplinary integration has drawn sustained academic attention to the relationship between translation studies and geography, giving rise to numerous emerging research fields. Against this backdrop, Chinese scholars such as Xu Jianzhong (2016) and He Aijun (2020) have proposed the establishment of Geo-translation Studies (He & Yu, 2022). He Aijun (2020) defines it as “a translation-oriented discipline that employs geography as its methodological framework to examine the formation, mobility, and distribution patterns of translation phenomena, along with their interactions with natural and human geography. It seeks to uncover the geographical determinants and evolutionary patterns governing translators, translation venues, and translation landscapes.” In the interview, He Aijun has also introduced a series of concepts in Geo-translation Studies, including translation zone, rotation of translation zones, topophilia, selective omission, eliminative repression, and reterritorialisation. Among these, translation zone and topophilia relate to translators’ choices, while selective omission, eliminative repression, and reterritorialisation pertain to translation strategies and methods they employ (Lu & Zhang, 2024).

2.1 Key Concepts

“Translation zone”, a central concept in Geo-translation Studies, is modelled after cultural zone and literary zone. Building upon cultural and literary regional divisions, He Aijun categorises China into eleven translation zones based on geographical features of translation elements (e.g., language pairs, translators, translation spaces, translation landscapes): Western Regions Translation Zone, Xizang (Tibet) Translation Zone, Qin-Long Translation Zone, Northeast Translation Zone, Yan-Zhao Translation Zone, Central Plains Translation Zone, Jing-Chu Translation Zone, Ba-Shu Translation Zone, Wu-Yue Translation Zone, Lingnan Translation Zone, Min-Tai (Fujian-Taiwan) Translation Zone. Notably, translation zones are not static but in a constant state of evolution. Some zones may dominate translation activity in certain historical periods while becoming marginalised in others. This cyclical shift over time constitutes the rotation of translation zones (He & Yu, 2022).

“Topophilia”, a term first introduced by Yi-Fu Tuan in 1974, refers to “the affective bond between people and land” (Tuan, 2021). This encompasses two fundamental dimensions: on one hand, it reflects an individual’s profound attachment to their natural surroundings; on the other, it denotes the intense and enduring emotional connection a person holds towards a particular region, especially their homeland. Translators residing in a specific region, having been continually shaped by the same geographical culture, inevitably develop an emotional attachment and sense of rootedness towards their local environment through prolonged living experience and social practice (He & Yu, 2022). This phenomenon subsequently influences their translational motivations and decision-making processes. When a critical mass of translators shares topophilic sentiments towards a particular region, this collective affinity can gradually give rise to the formation of a distinctive translation zone (Lu & Zhang, 2024).

2.2 Methodology

In addressing methodological concerns in Geo-translation Studies, He Aijun (2022) proposes three translation strategies: “selective omission”, “eliminative repression”, and “reterritorialisation”. “Selective omission” refers to translators, following their own cultural frameworks, deliberately omitting geographical information from the source text to meet their needs. In the translation process, they may consciously or unconsciously disregard elements that conflict with their views or values, resulting in a geographical space in the translated text that differs from the original yet aligns with their own and their target readers’ aesthetic expectations. “Eliminative repression” describes how translators, whether intentionally or not, alter or suppress geographical details in the original text, rejecting any geographical information that contradict their beliefs. This produces a reconfigured geographical space that matches either the translator’s or the target culture’s ideological perspective. “Reterritorialisation” refers to the translator’s act of transforming or reconstructing the geographical space originally depicted by the author in the source text. This process typically involves three stages: decoding territoriality, deterritorialisation, and reterritorialisation, ultimately generating a new “neo-territory”.

3. Analysis of *The Yellow River Culture* from the Perspective of Geo-Translation Studies

Yellow River cultural works embody the profound historical legacy and distinctive regional character of its basin. They depict not only the natural splendour and cultural landmarks along its course, but also encompass the region’s rich historical narratives and folklore, the river’s evolving management and ecological transformations, as well as the life and culture of local people. When undertaking translation, translators should cultivate a genuine “topophilia” to faithfully convey the original’s cultural essence while actively promoting this regional heritage. Meanwhile, they must judiciously balance target readers’ accessibility through strategic application of “selective omission” and “reterritorialisation” approaches—a tripartite process involving decoding territoriality, deterritorialisation, and reterritorialisation—thereby constructing a new translational space.

3.1 Translator's "Topophilia"

According to the classification of cultural and translation zones, *The Yellow River Culture* falls under the Central China Cultural Zone and the Central Plains Translation Zone. The Central China Cultural Zone, in turn, encompasses four secondary cultural zones: the Central Plains, Anhui, Hunan-Hubei, and Jiangxi (Hu et al., 2017). Although these cultural zones share significant similarities, the Yellow River primarily flows through the Central Plains Cultural Zone, shaping the distinctive Yellow River culture unique to this region. At the same time, despite belonging to different cultural zones, other provinces or autonomous regions through which the Yellow River flows—such as Qinghai, Gansu, Ningxia, Shaanxi, Shanxi, and Shandong—have collectively nurtured and contributed to the formation of the Yellow River culture, playing an indelible role in its development. Thus, these regions also share certain cultural commonalities.

Geo-translation Studies explores both the static and dynamic distribution patterns of translators. The study of static distribution focuses on the concentration of translators within a specific geographical area at a particular moment in time, primarily examining their birthplaces and places of origin. Meanwhile, dynamic distribution analyses the movement of translators away from their birthplaces and their subsequent clustering in specific regions, particularly their translation hubs—defined as the places where they engage in translation activities over an extended period (Sun & He, 2020).

Statistical analysis of the birthplaces, places of origin, and translation hubs of selected translators specialising in the Yellow River culture (Table 1) reveals that most contemporary translators engaged in the international dissemination of the Yellow River culture originate from the Central Plains Cultural Zone, with their translation activities predominantly concentrated in the Central Plains Translation Zone. Notably, Wang Qingyong and Yao Lijia translated *A Historical Survey of the Yellow River and the River Civilisations* (Ge & Hu, 2007), while Li Xiaojing, Zhang Qingbin, Chen Xingjie, and Shen Yang were responsible for the English rendition of *The Yellow River Culture* in the "Chinese Civilisation: Stories from Henan".

Table 1. Translators' birthplace, place of origin, and translation hub

Name	Birthplace	Place of Origin	Translation Hub
Qingyong Wang	Xinyang City, Henan Province	/	Tianjin Municipality
Lijia Yao	Xuancheng City, Anhui Province	/	Tianjin Municipality
Xiaojing Li	Shangqiu City, Henan Province	/	Zhengzhou City, Henan Province
Qingbin Zhang	Kaifeng City, Henan Province	/	Zhengzhou City, Henan Province
Xingjie Chen	Kaifeng City, Henan Province	Kaifeng City, Henan Province	Zhengzhou City, Henan Province
Yang Shen	Zhengzhou City, Henan Province	Zhengzhou City, Henan Province	Zhengzhou City, Henan Province

According to available statistics, translator Wang Qingyong is currently affiliated with Tianjin University of Technology. While his current translation activities are based in Tianjin Municipality, his academic background and early career were firmly rooted in Henan Province—having obtained both his bachelor's and master's degrees from Henan University before serving as an assistant at School of International Studies of Zhengzhou University. This prolonged residence in the Central Plains Cultural and Translation Zones has significantly influenced his professional development. The other four translators—Li Xiaojing, Zhang Qingbin, Chen Xingjie and Shen Yang—are currently all faculty members at Zhengzhou University, with their translation activities centred in Zhengzhou. It is particularly noteworthy that all these five translators originate from or claim ancestral roots within the Central Plains Cultural Zone. Their upbringing immersed in the Yellow River culture has fostered a profound cultural identification, motivating their active participation in the government-initiated translation projects promoting the Yellow River cultural publications. Notably, translator Li Xiaojing (2021) has contributed scholarly work in this field, publishing a paper that critically discusses the existing challenges in translating the Yellow River

culture, and has proposed corresponding translation strategies and dissemination approaches from the perspective of communication theory of translation in her paper.

The translator's "topophilia" constitutes a significant factor influencing and constraining translation practice and decision-making process. Most translators demonstrate this emotional attachment to land when selecting translation materials or undertaking translation projects, consciously or unconsciously allowing it to inform their professional choices. Although the six aforementioned translators were inevitably influenced by translation patronage (Lefevere, 1992)—with *A Historical Survey of the Yellow River and the River Civilisations* funded by the Chinese Academic Translation Project of the National Social Science Fund, and *The Yellow River Culture* supported by Foreign Affairs Office of the People's Government of Henan Province—their proactive engagement in these projects fundamentally stemmed from translator's subjective "topophilia". This affective driver not only manifests their profound connection to the Central Plains region, but also reflects a culturally-embedded sense of translational responsibility.

3.2 Translation Strategies for the Yellow River Culture

In Geo-translation Studies, He Aijun proposes three translation strategies: "selective omission", "eliminative repression", and "reterritorialisation", which collectively form the methodological framework of Geo-translation Studies.

3.2.1 Selective Omission

"Selective omission" refers to translators, following their own cultural frameworks, deliberately omitting geographical information from the source text to meet their needs. In the translation process, they may consciously or unconsciously disregard elements that conflict with their views or values, resulting in a geographical space in the translated text that differs from the original yet aligns with their own and their target readers' aesthetic expectations. When employing the strategy of "selective omission", the translator must judiciously handle culture-specific elements in the source text, ensuring that any omissions or simplifications do not compromise the work's central narrative or themes, while remaining faithful to the original's spirit and emotional resonance. The translator should strike a balance between source and target cultural differences, guarding against excessive simplification or generalisation that might lead to loss of meaning or reader misdirection, whilst preserving the integrity and accuracy of core information.

Example 1:

ST: 大禹为治理洪水劳身焦思，薄衣食、卑宫室，不敢有丝毫的松懈。

TT: Dayu struggled to control the flood, and he did not dare to relax in the slightest.

Analysis: This example is taken from Chapter 2, page 62. The original Chinese text "劳身焦思，薄衣食、卑宫室" vividly and concretely depicts the hardships Dayu (Yu the Great) endured in controlling the floods. These culturally rich expressions, unique to the source language, embody Dayu's noble character of wholeheartedly serving the people despite tremendous personal sacrifice. However, in the translation process, the translator deliberately omitted these specific details, retaining only the core message that "Yu the Great worked diligently to control the floods without the slightest relaxation". This was rendered as: "Dayu struggled to control the flood, and he did not dare to relax in the slightest". This approach serves the target readers' aesthetic expectations by producing a more concise and accessible translation. Crucially, the translator has judiciously handled the source material—while cultural specifics were omitted, the essential narrative concerning Dayu's flood control efforts remains intact. The translation thus preserves the original's fundamental spirit and emotional tone while balancing the source and target cultural contexts. Through maintaining the core message's integrity and accuracy, the version avoids the pitfalls of excessive simplification that might otherwise lead to loss of meaning or potential reader misdirection.

Example 2:

ST: 古代中国素以文献之邦著称，历代优秀的文学艺术作品层出不穷，宛若滔滔黄河，澎湃激扬，百川汇流，形成蔚为大观的中华民族独特情感表达方式，展现出鲜明的黄河流域农耕文化特色，给世界留下了丰富多彩的文学宝藏遗产。

TT: Ancient China was renowned as a land of literature, whose outstanding literary and artistic works in successive dynasties emerged one after another, just like the running Yellow River surging on. The confluence of all rivers and streams, presenting a splendid sight to show the unique expression of emotion of Chinese nation, displayed the distinct characteristics of farming culture in the Yellow River Basin, and left the world a rich and colorful literary heritage.

Analysis: This example is drawn from Chapter 3, page 112. The original Chinese text “宛若滔滔黄河，澎湃激扬，百川汇流，形成蔚为大观的中华民族独特情感表达方式” presents a profoundly vivid and poetic depiction. It not only portrays the Yellow River’s majestic spectacle but also metaphorically represents the profundity and rich diversity of Chinese cultural expression. However, the translation simplifies this to “just like the running Yellow River surging on. The confluence of all rivers and streams, presenting a splendid sight...”, omitting several evocative adjectives and imagery. Phrases such as “澎湃激扬” (surging and turbulent) and “蔚为大观” (a grand spectacle), which carry strong visual and emotional impact in Chinese, have been notably attenuated. Furthermore, the original’s “百川汇流” (convergence of countless rivers) functions not merely as a description of natural phenomena but as a cultural metaphor representing the integration of diverse regional cultures. While the translation mentions “the confluence of all rivers and streams”, it fails to adequately convey this deeper cultural symbolism—the convergence and synthesis of varied cultural traditions and intellectual currents. Through this strategic simplification and reduction of specific descriptors, cultural imagery and metaphorical dimensions, the translation achieves greater fluency and readability. However, this comes at the cost of certain culturally significant nuances present in the source text. The translator, whether consciously or otherwise, has omitted elements that might prove challenging or unfamiliar to target readers, prioritising textual accessibility over complete cultural fidelity.

Example 3:

ST: 战国时期产生的《国语》《战国策》等国别体史书，文辞纵横、生动优美，成为中国古代外交辞令的渊薮；

TT: In the Warring States Period, *Guoyu* (*The Discourse of the States*) and *Zhanguoce* (*Strategies of the Warring States*) and other history books whose writing was vivid and graceful with a country as a unit, became the collection of the best ancient Chinese diplomatic parlance.

Analysis: This example is taken from Chapter 3, page 110. The original Chinese phrase “文辞纵横、生动优美” not only emphasises the stylistic elegance of these historical classics but also implies their rhetorical complexity and discursive versatility, reflecting the intense political debates and strategic manoeuvring of the period. The term “纵横” (literally “vertical and horizontal”) conveys more than mere literary grace—it encompasses linguistic sophistication and narrative flexibility, demonstrating the authors’ profound insights and adaptive narrative techniques. However, the translation simplifies this to “whose writing was vivid and graceful”, deliberately omitting the nuanced concept of “纵横”. While this simplified rendering produces a text that differs somewhat from the original, the omission does not fundamentally alter the core content regarding the emergence of these state-focused histories (《国语》《战国策》, etc.) during the Warring States Period as repositories of ancient Chinese diplomatic discourse. The translation maintains the original’s essential spirit of describing the texts’ stylistic characteristics while adapting to the target readers’ aesthetic preference for concise, accessible expression. In rendering “国别体史书” (state-specific historical books), the translator opted for an explanatory phrasing—“history books...with a country as a unit”—rather than retaining the specialised Chinese historiographical term. Similarly, the original’s “成为中国古代外交辞令的渊薮” (literally “became the deep source and gathering place of ancient Chinese diplomatic rhetoric”) was simplified to “became the collection of the best ancient Chinese diplomatic parlance”. While conveying the basic notion of these texts as compendiums of diplomatic rhetoric, this rendering loses the rich connotations of “渊薮” as both authoritative source and profound repository, with its implications of historical depth and institutional authority. The translator’s choices—simplifying complex cultural concepts and omitting certain nuances—reflect an intentional adaptation to the target readers’ cognitive framework. These decisions prioritise immediate comprehensibility over exhaustive cultural precision, enabling target readers to grasp the core information efficiently while maintaining the text’s fundamental historical claims and stylistic characterisations.

3.2.2 Reterritorialisation

“Reterritorialisation” refers to the translator’s act of transforming or reconstructing the geographical space originally depicted by the author in the source text. It constitutes a territorialised reproduction of previously deterritorialised cultural symbols, achieved by appropriating these representational elements to reconstruct signifiers in the target culture (He & Yu, 2022). When applying the strategy of “reterritorialisation”, the translator should carefully identify equivalent or analogous cultural symbols, geographical spaces, and symbolic elements within the target culture to preserve the original work’s distinctiveness and emotional resonance. The adapted elements should integrate naturally into the target culture’s framework without distorting the source text’s core meaning. Furthermore, supplementary explanations or annotations may be necessary to aid target readers in comprehending the source culture’s specific context. This approach ensures the preservation of the work’s literary

style and artistic value, allowing target readers to experience and appreciate the work in a manner comparable to that of source language readers.

Example 4:

ST: “铜头铁尾豆腐腰”: 善淤易徙的黄河中游地质特征

TT: “Copper Head, Iron Tail and Tofu Waist” Which Means the Two Ends Are Solid While the Middle Is Soft: the Geological Characteristics of the Middle Reaches of the Yellow River That Are Prone to Silting and Migration

Analysis: This example is drawn from Chapter 1, page 13. The original Chinese expression “铜头铁尾豆腐腰” (literally “copper head, iron tail and tofu waist”) represents a culturally distinctive metaphorical depiction of the Yellow River’s geological characteristics, carrying unique connotations and emotional resonance within the source language culture. The translator rendered this as “‘Copper Head, Iron Tail and Tofu Waist’ Which Means the Two Ends Are Solid While the Middle Is Soft”, employing foreignisation strategy that preserves the original cultural form while providing explanatory context. This approach successfully preserves the distinctive character of the original work while enabling target readers to comprehend the underlying geological significance of the Yellow River’s middle reaches. The adapted elements are seamlessly integrated into the target language culture without distorting the source text’s fundamental meaning. Moreover, it facilitates the target readers’ appreciation of the work to a certain degree, thereby fully satisfying the requirements of “reterritorialisation”.

Example 5:

ST: 如孔子所编《春秋》，是中国现存第一部编年体史书，言简意赅而藏褒贬大义，被后世敬称为“春秋笔法”“微言大义”；

TT: For example, *Chunqiu (The Spring and Autumn Annals)*, compiled by Confucius, is the first chronological history book in China in existence, which is comprehensive and concise, implying praise or criticism. It has been known as “Chunqiu Style” (a style of writing in which sublime words have deep meaning) and “subtle interpretation of great meaning”.

Analysis: This example, drawn from Chapter 3, page 110, demonstrates several nuanced translation decisions. Firstly, the rendering of 《春秋》 as “the first chronological history book in China in existence” not only literally translates “中国现存第一部编年体史书” but also emphasises the text’s seminal position in Chinese historiography. This approach preserves both the temporal specificity and unique status of the original while employing the more universally comprehensible concept of a “chronological history book” to facilitate the Western readers’ immediate understanding of the text’s annalistic feature. Secondly, the translation of “言简意赅而藏褒贬大义” as “which is comprehensive and concise, implying praise or criticism” artfully captures the essence of the original text. The translation of “言简意赅” as “comprehensive and concise” effectively conveys *The Spring and Autumn Annals*’ characteristic brevity coupled with substantive content. For “藏褒贬大义”, rather than opting for a more literal “with hidden praise or criticism”, the translator judiciously selected “implying praise or criticism”—a formulation that avoids excessive explicitness while preserving the subtlety of the text’s embedded judgements. The choice of “implying” particularly suggests the Annals’ sophisticated approach to historical recording, where moral and historical evaluations are conveyed through nuanced phrasing rather than overt commentary. Finally, the retention of the term “Chunqiu Style”, accompanied by its explanation as “a style of writing in which sublime words have deep meaning”, exemplifies effective “reterritorialisation”. This treatment maintains the original cultural elements while providing target readers with meaningful explanation. Such an approach enables target readers to appreciate both the distinctive literary form and the profound complexity of *The Spring and Autumn Annals* as a historical work.

Example 6:

ST: 春秋时代，以黄河中下游地区为主要活动范围的“华夏族”逐步形成，并产生“华夏”与“蛮夷”相区分的民族意识，强调天下以“华夏”为文明中心，视四周“蛮夷”为从属。这种认知固然有其时代的局限性，但对中国古代中原地区的民族认同凝聚亦产生了积极的作用，对后世以黄河流域稳定的主体族群——汉族的形成产生了决定性的影响。

TT: During the Spring and Autumn Period, the “Huaxia” with the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River as the main scope of activities gradually formed, and the national consciousness of distinguishing between “Huaxia” and “barbarians” came into being, emphasizing that the world took “Huaxia” as the center of civilization and the surrounding “barbarians” as subordinates. Although this kind of cognition had its limitations in times, it also played a positive role in rallying national identity in the Central Plains in ancient China. It exerted a decisive influence on the formation of the later Han nationality, the main ethnic group stabilized in the Yellow River Basin.

Analysis: This example, taken from Chapter 3, page 130, presents two culturally loaded terms: “华夏” (Huaxia) and “蛮夷” (barbarians). In rendering these concepts, the translator adopted distinct strategies for each term. For “华夏”, foreignisation strategy was employed through transliteration as “Huaxia”—an appropriate solution given the absence of an exact equivalent in the target language. The translation further provides contextual explanation regarding the historical distinction between “Huaxia” and “barbarians”. The rendering of “蛮夷” as “barbarians” represents domestication strategy. This lexical choice warrants careful consideration: the word “barbarian”, originating from ancient Roman usage to denote non-Roman people perceived as uncivilised, carries enduring Eurocentric connotations reflecting historical cultural prejudice and hierarchies. The Chinese concept of “蛮夷” bears certain similarity—referring historically to non-Huaxia ethnic groups surrounding the Central Plains (such as the Dongyi, Nanman, Xirong and Beidi), whose cultures, languages and social structures differed from the Huaxia civilisation. Like its Western counterpart, the term often conveyed Huaxia’s superiority in certain contexts. Rather than opting for neutralisation or transliteration (“Manyi”), the translator employs quotation marks and contextual explanation to signal the term’s specific historical and cultural meaning, distinguishing it from contemporary pejorative usage. This “reterritorialisation” approach enables target readers to comprehend both ancient Chinese ethnocentric awareness and the Huaxia civilisation’s self-perception as cultural centre, while reconstructing the cultural signifier “蛮夷” with appropriate depth and specificity in the target text.

4. Conclusion

4.1 Findings

This paper presents an in-depth investigation into the translation of the Yellow River cultural work—*The Yellow River Culture*, and examines the subject through Geo-translation Studies. The study focuses on translators’ “topophilia” and their employed translation strategies, aiming to explore effective approaches for facilitating the international dissemination of the Yellow River culture. The research reveals that translators are commonly influenced by “topophilia”, which drives their active participation in translating Yellow River cultural materials. Most translators originate from or have ancestral ties to the Central Plains Cultural Zone, with their translation activities mainly concentrated in the same region. Deeply immersed in the Yellow River culture, they exhibit strong cultural identification and a sense of responsibility, factors that significantly influence their selection of translation materials and translation behaviour.

In terms of translation strategies, “selective omission” and “reterritorialisation” emerge as the primary approaches, adopted to accommodate target readers’ aesthetic preferences and cognitive frameworks. Yellow River cultural works are predominantly informative in nature, serving to provide comprehensive and accurate historical, geographical, social, economic, and cultural information about the Yellow River Basin. These works target diverse readers including scholars, students and cultural enthusiasts—audiences who place particular emphasis on factual accuracy and objectivity. Consequently, when handling such materials, translators must maintain rigorous fidelity to the source content to preserve informational integrity, thereby upholding the works’ academic credibility. In this context, the “eliminative repression” strategy is consciously avoided. “Selective omission” permits the omission of culturally specific details that might hinder comprehension for target readers while not substantially affecting their understanding of core content, thereby enhancing textual fluency. Meanwhile, “reterritorialisation” facilitates cross-cultural engagement through the judicious incorporation of analogous cultural elements from the target context, promoting deeper reader connection while retaining the original’s cultural essence.

Geo-translation Studies provides both a novel theoretical framework and practical guidance for translating and introducing the Yellow River culture. By examining translators’ “topophilia” and implementing appropriate translation strategies, we may enhance the cross-cultural adaptation of Yellow River cultural works in English-speaking world, thereby contributing to the global circulation of the Yellow River culture and strengthening China’s international cultural influence. Future efforts should further develop the application of Geo-translation Studies in this field to optimise the overseas dissemination and exchange of the Yellow River culture.

4.2 Limitations

While this study provides valuable insights into the translation and introduction of the Yellow River culture from the perspective of Geo-translation Studies, it acknowledges several limitations that should be considered in future research.

Firstly, the sample of translators analysed in this study is relatively small and limited to those who have worked on specific Yellow River cultural works. This limited sample size may not fully represent the broader range of translators engaging in the field of Chinese cultural translation.

Secondly, the concept of “topophilia” is central to this study, but it may introduce potential biases. The emotional

attachment of translators to their homeland or region, as discussed in the context of “topophilia”, could influence their translation choices in ways that may not be fully captured or quantified in this study. Additionally, the study assumes a relatively homogeneous cultural identity among translators from the Central Plains Cultural Zone, which may overlook individual differences and variations in their translation practices.

Lastly, while Geo-translation Studies offers a novel theoretical framework for analysing translation practices, its application in this study is primarily qualitative.

Despite these limitations, this study contributes to the growing body of research in Geo-translation Studies and offers practical guidance for the translation and dissemination of the Yellow River culture. Future efforts should aim to address these limitations by expanding the sample to include a more diverse group of translators, exploring the nuances of individual translators’ motivations, and incorporating quantitative methods to measure the impact of translation strategies on reader comprehension and cultural reception. These steps will help provide a more comprehensive understanding of the translation strategies and motivations at play and further develop the application of Geo-translation Studies in this field.

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