



Pragmatic reproduction of cultural-linguistic referents in translation from Spanish to Chinese

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Abstract. This paper examines the pragmatic translation of cultural-linguistic items through a relevance-theoretic study. The results suggest: 1) implicative value of the cultural-linguistic items is context-dependent and 2) loss of the linguistic form might imply the loss of the implicit clue. The study aims to expose the pragmatic values conveyed by the cultural-linguistic elements of Spanish and its Chinese translation. Furthermore, it explores how much original Spanish linguistic elements are accessible to the target readers of the Chinese translation. Based on a Spanish novel, namely *La Colmena*, and its Chinese translation *Feng Fang*, linguistic cultural referents from the Spanish original and their translations were compared, considering their cognitive contexts. This research points to the fact that the cognitive-environmental values of cultural-linguistic elements are generally underestimated, especially in Spanish-to-Chinese translation and, a large number of Spanish linguistic items do not maintain their implicatures in the Chinese translation due to different contextual assumptions.

Keywords: linguistic culture; cognitive environment; relevance theory; implicative quality

[es] La aproximación pragmática de la cultura lingüística en las traducciones del español al chino

Resumen. El presente artículo se centra en las particularidades de la traducción pragmática de la cultura lingüística a través de la teoría de la relevancia. Para llevar a cabo este análisis, nos hemos basado en la célebre novela *La Colmena* y su traducción al chino, *Feng Fang*. De esta manera, analizaremos y compararemos los elementos lingüísticos originales y los traducidos a partir de los distintos contextos cognitivos en ambas versiones. En términos generales, la investigación ya nos revela, en primer lugar, que no se presta suficiente atención a los valores cognitivos de la cultura lingüística, sobre todo, en lo que se refiere a las traducciones español-chino. En segundo lugar, debido a los distintos conocimientos contextuales entre los lectores españoles y los chinos, la omisión de la forma lingüística podría provocar la pérdida de los elementos implícitos de las obras originales.

Palabras clave: cultura lingüística; entorno cognitivo; teoría de la relevancia; valor implícito

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[zh] 西汉翻译中跨文化言语的语用认知研究

摘要. 本文以关联理论为基础, 对西汉跨文化言语的语用翻译进行探讨。本文的研究内容包括分析西班牙语-汉语翻译中跨文化言语的语用价值和探讨西班牙语中跨文化言语在汉语读者中的接受程度。本文将从西班牙语文学作品 *La Colmena* 及其中文译本《蜂房》中选取跨文化言语作为研究对象, 以原语读者与译语读者的认知语境为出发点, 分析并对比西汉跨文化言语的语用价值。研究表明, 以西班牙语-汉语跨文化言语为研究对象的语用认知翻译研究较少; 且由于中国读者与西班牙语读者的认知语境不同, 汉语译本中跨文化言语的语言形式的缺失将会影响西班牙语跨文化言语语用价值的传递。

关键词: 跨文化言语; 认知语境; 关联理论; 语用价值

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1. Introduction

As the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis states, language and culture affect each other; meanwhile, culture is reflected through language. Undoubtedly, each culture has its own linguistic regularities, which might not have equivalence in other cultures. In the study of Nida (1945, 203-208) regarding cultural segments, linguistic culture was proposed as one of the basic categories in cultural translation that would hinder successful communication between works and readers. There are a number of studies which concentrate on linguistic culture or focus on semantic or pragmatic features (Wu 2013; Mangiron 2008; Molina 2006; Nida 1945), but still, the implicative quality of cultural-linguistic elements has not yet been thoroughly documented. Gutt (2014), who introduced relevance theory into translation studies, points to the fact that one of the features contributing to the interpretation of the implicature is the cognitive context, which has two primordial factors: contextual effect and its processing effort. Despite an increasing number of translation studies focusing on relevance theory, the scholarly references on the relevance-theoretic view of cultural-linguistic study are scarce, particularly relating to translations between Spanish and Chinese.

To fill the gap in systematic cultural-linguistic research from a relevance-theoretic viewpoint, a Spanish postwar novel, *La Colmena*, and its Chinese translation, *Feng Fang*, have been selected in order to explore the pragmatic reproduction of cultural-linguistic elements in literary translation from Spanish to Chinese. Firstly, the pragmatic features of cultural-linguistic manifestations will be described, comparing both cognitive contexts of Spanish and Chinese readers. This will be followed by an analysis of how source and target readers are capable to grasp the pragmatic meaning of each cultural-linguistic instance considering both contextual effects and processing effort.

This study differs from other research in the following ways: 1) it describes the cultural-linguistic features from a relevance-theoretic perspective, which gives prominence to the essential role played by the cognitive context in linguistic manifestations; 2) it aims to work with the pragmatic qualities of given Spanish and Chinese cultural-linguistic utterances, which will shed new light on intercultural research between Spanish and Chinese; and 3) it highlights the need for the systematic study of the linguistic culture between Spanish and Chinese from a cognitive-contextual perspective.

2. State of the art revisited

2.1 Relevance Theory in translation

In order to analyze the implicit value of each cultural-linguistic element, the theoretical framework used for underpinning the text analysis is relevance theory, where the significance of cognitive context is proved (Gutt 1991; Sperber and Wilson 1986). As Gutt (1991) suggested, the original utterance conveys the explicatures as well as the implicatures. The audience needs to infer the undeclared intention of the speaker from communicative clues. As for the translation, the reproduction also needs to resemble the message in a way that target readers can feel the same relevance (Gutt 1991). However, due to different cognitive contexts, target readers may not be able to perceive the implicatures, whose stimulus only makes sense in the original cognitive context (Gutt 1991). By such means, Gutt (1991) confirmed the pivotal role of the cognitive environment for the interpretation of the implicatures in the target context by introducing the communicative relevance theory into translation studies.

As relevance theory argues, the key for interpreting implicit messages resides in the cognitive environment, which is widely accepted as ‘a psychological formulation and a set of the hearer’s assumptions around the world’ (Sperber and Wilson 1986). The contextual assumptions include details grasped in the physical environment as well as cultural or other information kept in the memory (Gutt 1991, 26). The context referred to in relevance theory concerns more about the cognitive relationship between the information and its mental representation rather than external contextual factors (Gutt 1991, 25).

Sperber and Wilson (1986,125) pointed out two essential factors of context for the optimal relevance of communication: contextual effects and processing effort. In other words, the principle of the relevance would lead to the expectation that communication would generate adequate contextual effects at minimal processing effort (Gutt 2014, 25). On one hand, the cognitive context plays a significant role in acquiring the optimal contextual effects in communication. The different mental assumptions of the same cultural instance may cause in other contexts an inaccurate mental association that is not raised in the original cognitive environments (Gutt 1991, 95). On the other hand, as Sperber and Wilson (1986) rightly stated, not all of the contextual assumptions serve for successful communication. To reveal all of the implicit properties conveyed in the message, the interlocutors must have tremendously accessible contextual assumptions. The more effort that speakers require to retrieve the mental representation, the fewer possibilities they have for the full interpretation of the original information

(Sperber and Wilson 1986). As far as the translation is concerned, if the message is transferred to a different cognitive context and requires too much processing effort for the integrated interpretation of the content, it will not reproduce adequate contextual effects in the target text as the original does in the source text (Gutt 1991, 95).

In the light of the above discussion, these two essential cognitive elements, contextual effects and processing effort, will be employed in the present study to explore the implicatures conveyed by the cultural-linguistic instances in the Spanish and Chinese cognitive environments.

2.2 Cultural referents in translation studies

The translation of cultural instances has been the subject of an enormous boom in research, resulting in a great deal of recent books, articles on the topics, special issues as well as dissertations (Mangiron 2008; Molina 2006; Santamaria Guinot 2001; Nord 1997; Vermeer 1983; Newmark 1981, 1988; Nida 1945). Vermeer (1983) denominates cultural features as *culturemes* (cited in Nord, 1997:34), which is, according to this author, a social phenomenon that is peculiar to one culture when it is compared to a corresponding phenomenon of another culture. The study of Vermeer (1983) concentrated on the comparison of cultural phenomena, while Santamaria (2010) focused more on the cognitive environment, where the cultural phenomenon arises. Having expanded previous academic studies regarding cultural discrepancy, Santamaria (2010) suggested a new term cultural referent to maintain the conceptual difference with *cultureme*, which is employed by Vermeer (1983) and Nord (1997). As accurately asserted by Santamaria (2010), each cultural referent has its cognitive value, which establishes a corresponding mental representation. This representation can only be activated in the corresponding cognitive context. In this sense, Santamaria (2010) explored how the target readers associate characters with a given sociocultural environment (Santamaria 2010). Santamaria's assumption is concurrent with the relevance-theoretic position of Sperber and Wilson (1986) and Gutt (1991), which can be interpreted as that each cultural element carries a given cognitive quality that correlates with a mental representation and can only generate an extensive contextual effect with proper contextual assumptions.

Moreover, not only has the definition or quality of cultural instances been successfully documented, different endeavors have also been made to systematically classify cultural referents. Nida (1945), from the perspective of dynamic equivalence, classifies cultural elements into five categories: ecological culture, material culture, social culture, religious culture and linguistic culture. Similarly, taking Nida's cultural view as a starting point, Molina (2006) proposes another catalog that allows the author to accommodate the *culturemes* collected in an Arabic-Spanish corpus. The classification covers a wide range of cultural concepts and is flexible in order to locate more cultural instances, which has only four categories: natural environment, cultural heritage, social culture and linguistic culture (Molina 2006, 80-82). In contrast, Santamaria's classification (2000) is more explicit and has more detailed subcategories, including ecology, history, social structure, cultural institutions, social universe and material culture. As previously indicated, the classification of the cultural referents proposed by

Santamaria attempts to capture the cognitive relationship that readers establish between the sociocultural values of cultural referents with contextual assumptions. This formed the basis of Carme Mangiron's modified taxonomy (2008), which covers cultural references in Japanese, English, Spanish and Catalan, including natural environment, history, social culture, cultural institutions, material culture, linguistic culture and cultural interferences.

2.3 An overview of previous translation studies on linguistic culture

As shown in the previous section, linguistic culture is one of the core categories of cultural translation, which is included in the classifications of Mangiron (2008), Molina (2006) and Nida (1945), but absent in Santamaria's (2000). In this section, we will present more details about this cultural category.

As Nida (1945) rightly states, each linguistic expression could have its cultural load, which would finally lead to the difficulty of finding equivalence in translation. The author divided cultural-linguistic items into four groups: phonology, morphology, syntax and lexicon. But the proposition of Nida's (1945) dynamic equivalence is mainly concerned with the grammatical and lexical features of cultural-linguistic instances. As Nida (1945) suggested, most of the translation problems caused by the phonological system of two languages lie in proper names, songs or poems, which require a strict preservation of rhythm. The second category, morphology, is often claimed to be the internal structure of grammatical expressions. Similarly, the dissimilarity of the syntax between languages also indicates great obstacles for intercultural mediators. Translators usually have to adapt the original syntactic form to the target language to avoid misinterpretation caused by different syntaxes. The asymmetry of the lexicon between different languages captures the final attention to Nida (1945) since the vocabulary in each language varies by the relationship between speakers and its closest environment.

Based on the research of Nida (1945), Molina (2006) reorganized the cultural-linguistic taxonomy for the Arabic-Spanish intercultural study into transliterations, sayings, phrases, generalized metaphors, symbolic associations, interjections, blasphemies, insults, etc. The author maintained in this study (2006) transliterations, interjections, insults and blasphemies, which are designated as phonology and lexicon in Nida's (1945), and incorporated intercultural problems derived from proverbs and phrases, and generalized metaphors and symbolic associations (symbols for colors, flavors, animals, among others). Meanwhile, Molina (2006) removed syntactic and morphological segments on account of their irrelevance with the cultural problems and the repetition in the category of social culture. For this author, contrasting cultural context is the essential condition for the existence of *culturemes*. In this study, both semantic and pragmatic properties of the dynamic equivalence were taken into consideration. However, the internal cognitive association between contextual assumption and the communicative clue has not been explored in this study even though some external contextual factors, like cultural and immediate contexts, were already taken into consideration.

In a similar approach, Mangiron (2008) put forward another cultural-linguistic taxonomy, writing system, dialects, sayings, expressions and phrases, puns, insults, and onomatopoeias with the purpose of assembling cultural-linguistic elements

from Japanese, English, Spanish and Catalan corpus. This classification is similar to that of Molina (2006) in some categories: sayings, expressions and phrases, insults. Nonetheless, Mangiron (2008) suggested writing system as a crucial part for cultural-linguistic researches in the studies of Japanese text and placed emphasis on dialects, puns, and onomatopoeias. In this study, Mangiron (2008) explored the extratextual factors, like place and time of the publication, the purpose of the translation, as well as the textual factors of the original and the translation work. But Mangiron (2008) did not stress the role the cognitive context played in the cultural-linguistic study.

Sharing the same position with Santamaria (2000), who has not included cultural-linguistic as a category in this classification, Sian-Huang Wu (2013) proposed a new taxonomy of linguistic culture that allows the author to study the cultural-linguistic instances with a socio-cognitive view. Nonetheless, the research is not focused on written material, but on Chinese-Spanish audiovisual translations. As such, some categories, like primary qualities or differentiators, would not be suitable for a written material. The audiovisual focus of the study may also suggest that this classification may not catalog all the cultural-linguistic elements taken from a literal publication.

Wu (2013) aimed at exploring the sociolinguistic qualities that interfere with the social identification of characters in dubbing and gives prominence to the cognitive contexts. The author posited that lexical differences between Chinese Mandarin and Chinese in Taiwan could not only lead to misinterpretation but may also characterize the speakers. It means that Chinese audiences could recognize the characters of speakers between geographical areas (Mainland China or Taiwan, China) based on these lexical dissimilarities. But when these Chinese films are translated and dubbed in Spanish, this sociolinguistic clue may be lost due to the change of cognitive context. By such means, Wu (2013) proposed the classification adopting a relevance-theoretic approach, which allows the author to study the mental representation behind each cultural-linguistic segment: lexicon, syntax, writing, primary qualities, qualifiers, differentiators, alternating items, silence, pauses and kinesthetic qualities. Additionally, she posited that some elements could belong to one or several categories under the certain contexts where the cultural references emerge. That is to say, the categorization of the same linguistic element could be changed, and it may depend on the communicative conditions. For example, *hombre* ('man') could be an intensifier or a vocative in Spanish, depending on its communicative situation. When, in *La Colmena*, Ventura says: *¡Pero, hombre, así no se puede vivir!* ('But **man**, you cannot live like this!'], *hombre* ('man') should be considered to reinforce the disagreement but not being regarded as a vocative according to its context.

A careful review of the seminal literature on the topic shows two major limitations. Initially, in these articles (Nida 1945; Molina 2006; Mangiron 2006) the role of the cognitive environment had not been stressed in the cultural-linguistic study. As indicated, Nida's concern (1945) is restricted to the linguistic and semantic perspectives, Santamaria (2000) removed the linguistic culture from the categorization, and Molina (2006) and Mangiron (2008) mainly considered the external contextual factors, not the mental representation. Secondly, such studies on Spanish-Chinese translation are insufficient. Wu (2013) explored the cultural-

linguistic items in Chinese-Spanish audiovisual translations from a pragmatic perspective, however, most of the elements in this classification are exclusively related to the audiovisual materials.

3. Research objective and methodology

As stated in the previous section, there are two factors which are not normally considered or given sufficient attention to in exploring the implicative cultural-linguistic differences of translation studies: the underestimation of the role played by the cognitive context and the scarce corresponding investigation of translations between Spanish and Chinese. Therefore, the overall goal of this study is to explore the pragmatic reproduction of such cultural-linguistic instances in translations as well as to identify the possible regularities of Spanish and Chinese linguistic items with relevance theory.

For this purpose, a Spanish postwar novel *La Colmena* and its Chinese rendition *Feng Fang* (蜂房) were selected, having met the following two criteria: 1) there are a number of dialogues in the novel, and 2) the novel includes a set of cultural-linguistic elements. The author, Camilo José Cela, a Spanish writer with considerable prestige and the winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1989, describes in *La Colmena* the daily life of the people of Madrid in December 1943. The Chinese translation was published in the Chinese mainland in 1987 and its translator is Meng Jicheng, who lived in Beijing at that time. This novel presents multiple situations that reflect the true reality of certain historical moments. It offers a wide range of cultural referents, among which are many segments that can be classified within the cultural-linguistic category. Hence, this book was selected to form our corpus.

The Spanish novel is compared bilingually along with its Chinese rendition with the purpose of extracting the cultural-linguistic elements. After identifying the Spanish linguistic segments, each instance is compared to its paired translation in Chinese considering both cognitive contexts. Some examples are presented in section 4 in order to show how the implicature of the linguistic representation is transmitted in the translation. For the qualitative analysis, initially, the pragmatic quality of the original cultural-linguistic segment will be presented with an exploration of the contextual effect generated in the original context. It will then be compared with its Chinese translation regarding the target contextual assumption and processing effort. Finally, a detailed discussion will summarize the regularities of the cultural-linguistic translation from Spanish to Chinese.

4. Analysis of translation

A careful comparison of the coupled cultural-linguistic instances against each other helps to begin the preliminary pragmatic analysis of the Spanish-Chinese cultural-linguistic elements from these four patterns: 1) proper names, 2) pejorative terms, 3) morphological forms and 4) idiomatic expressions and sayings. The following sections explore these four categories from a pragmatic perspective, and the analysis is based on the empirical and relevant framework proposed by Gutt (1991). More detailed discussion of this analysis is provided at the end of this section.

4.1 Proper names

With regard to proper names with additional meanings, Nida (1945) and Molina (2006) incorporated them in their cultural-linguistic categorization, whereas Mangiron (2008) moved them to the social-cultural category. Proper names may have their origins and meanings in each culture. Nonetheless, due to the long distance between Chinese and Spanish cultures, many of the pragmatic denotations may disappear when they are translated into the other language. When Spanish anthroponyms are being translated into Chinese, the common translation technique would be transliteration, which means each syllable is transformed into one Chinese character. It is believed that there are many linguistic details that can lead to pragmatic misreading. For this reason, anthroponyms are involved in our cultural-linguistic study. In *La Colmena*, there are several names that have religious connotations, such as those presented in the following example.

- (1) ST: Doña Visitación Leclerc de Moisés, por bautizar dos chinitos con los nombres de **Ignacio y Francisco Javier**, 10 pesetas. ('Mrs. Visitación Leclerc de Moisés, for baptizing two Chinese children with the names of **Ignacio and Francisco Javier**, 10 pesetas.')

TT: 比希塔森·莱克莱尔克·德莫伊塞斯夫人，用**伊格纳西奥**和**弗朗西斯科·哈维尔**两个名字为两个中国孩子做了洗礼，奖 10 比塞塔。
(‘Mrs. Visitación Leclerc de Moisés, for baptizing two Chinese children with the names of **Yi Ge Na Xi Ao** and **Fu Lan Xi Si Ke Ha Wei Er**, 10 pesetas.’)

In Catholicism, *Francisco Javier* and *Ignacio* are Jesuits, founders of the Society of Jesus. Concerning Spanish readers' religious knowledge, they would be well aware that the two newborn children are baptized with Catholic names even though they are Chinese. Furthermore, considering the context in which these two names are used, it can be seen that Mrs. Visitación is the one who selected these Catholic names for baptism. Hence there is good reason to believe that Mrs. Visitación could also be a Catholic. Additionally, there are also implicative details inside the name of *Visitación Leclerc de Moisés* according to Spanish contextual knowledge. The word *Visitación* ('Visitation') refers to a scene in the Gospels, and *Moisés* is a religious name from the Bible. This can be better explained that it is a religious-relevant hint from the author, Cela, who expected the readers to catch the spiritual characterization of Mrs. Visitación from her cultural background.

In China, the vast majority of the population does not have a specific spiritual belief, so they do not have the knowledge to help them associate these two names with Catholicism. As to the reproduction of these names in a Chinese rendition, the translator transliterates them directly into Chinese characters, which are scarcely used in Chinese because the translated names are much longer than common Chinese names. Since the names do not convey any religious implication when transliterated into Chinese, they lose the contextual effects of the religious names and the spiritual belief of Mrs. Visitación.

4.2 Pejorative terms

As previously shown, in the classification of Molina (2006) and Mangiron (2006), insults are included as a relevant feature of cultural-linguistic categories. In our research, we believe that pejorative terms may also contain pragmatic values that produce different contextual effects due to the divergent contextual assumptions. Therefore, in the following subdivision, we will discuss the pragmatic property of the pejorative terms considering contextual assumptions and provide examples.

(2) ST: ¡Un **rojo** indecente, y un **chulo**! (‘An indecent **red**, and a **cheeky adult**!’)

TT: 放肆的**红鬼**、**楚佬儿**! (‘impudent **red monster**, and **Chu cheeky adult**!’)

In the example above, *rojo* (‘red’) and *chulo* (‘cheeky adult’) are two pejorative expressions that the speaker used to insult the interlocutor in the original context. *Rojo* (‘red’) in Spanish refers to the Communist Party of Spain in the context of the era. The party lost the civil war against Franco, and thus was clandestine under the dictatorship of General Franco. In the original context, the communist equals an abusive remark. Whereas, the Communist Party in China is considered to be a leader of the country since 1949, when it won the civil war and built the People’s Republic of China. This difference in social development contributes to the varied pragmatic value possessed in these two linguistic terms. In other words, *Rojo* (‘red’), referring to the member of the Communist Party in Spanish, is no longer an abusive remark in the Chinese context.

In the rendition, the pejorative term is changed and transferred as 红鬼 (‘red monster’) in the translation due to the different social environments. In Chinese, this expression would not be associated with the Communist Party. Hence Chinese readers might fail to grasp this detail. Additionally, the expression of 红鬼 (‘red monster’) does not exist in Chinese vocabulary, which is a creation of the translator. Since 鬼 (‘monster’) remains as a negative term in most of Chinese contexts, Chinese readers would still treat 红鬼 (‘red monster’) as an insult without apprehending its exact meaning. Still, there are good reasons to believe that Chinese readers would ponder on this utterance rather than retrieve it straight from mental assumptions since it is not an existed expression in Chinese. That is to say, it would take Chinese readers more processing effort to grasp the negative sense than the original insult as it functions in the Spanish context. Taken together, the translation 红鬼 (‘red monster’) transmits the insulting sense, but reduces the contextual effect.

In another pejorative term, the translator used the same creation technique to reproduce the abusive remark *chulo* (‘cheeky adult’) in the rendition 楚佬儿 (‘Chu cheeky adult’). In the original text, *chulo* (‘cheeky adult’) describes a category of adult people who are rude and conceited. In Chinese, 楚 (‘Chu’) refers to an ancient country during the Spring and Autumn Period in Chinese history and geographically located in the Central, East and South China. 楚 (‘Chu’) had a pejorative sense in the past because the people from this region were ethnic minorities that were regarded as uncivilized and rude. 佬儿 (‘adult’) is a dialect word commonly used in Cantonese, which means adults but generally in a pejorative sense. Literally, 楚佬儿 (‘Chu cheeky adult’) means adults from the region ‘Chu’. It could be interpreted as that firstly, the translator uses 楚 (‘Chu’) to

imitate the first syllable of *chulo* ('cheeky') to maintain the consistency of pronunciation with the original. Secondly, the translator might try to provide a possibility for the readers to perceive the pejorative meaning concealed in the cognitive context by alluding to the impudent adult from the primitive area with the reproduction of 楚佬儿 ('Chu cheeky adult').

However, like the first pejorative term of 红鬼 ('red monster'), 楚佬儿 ('Chu cheeky adult') does not exist in the modern Chinese vocabulary. This implicature might require a great deal of processing efforts for Chinese readers because the Cantonese dialect 佬儿 ('cheeky adult') is mainly used in particular regions of China. For the readers, who are not from these regions, the pejorative markedness could not be easily detected and would require more processing efforts to generate adequate contextual effect. Consequently, the contextual effect that 楚佬儿 ('Chu cheeky adult') produces is much weaker than what it embodies in the original text.

4.3 Morphological forms

In this section, we will discuss Spanish morphological forms, diminutives and augmentatives. Spanish diminutives express the smallness of the item and usually communicate affectionate connotations. Similarly, augmentatives highlight the large size or the quality of great importance. Under certain circumstances, diminutives or augmentatives may also convey negative connotations depending on the context. However, there might not be any identical form to translate Spanish diminutives or augmentatives into Chinese. Consequently, these morphological forms are often replaced by words like *small* or *large*, by which their pragmatic qualities seem to be lost. For example, in Hispanic countries, if we hear the utterance *qué pequeñitos ojos tiene la niña* ('what little eyes the girl has'), it could also be interpreted as the fondness of a girl's lovely eyes despite the fact that big eyes are generally considered more attractive in reality. Differently in China, if it is literally translated as 小眼睛 ('little eyes'), it might not be able to communicate the positive connotation between Chinese readers as its original does in Hispanic context, and it might be interpreted unexpectedly as a scorn for the little eyes.

Erhuayin, which requires a syllabic supplement *er* (儿) in or after each expression, is a Chinese morphological form that has similar positive contextual effects as diminutives do in Spanish. It is common in colloquial speak in the North of China, and especially in Beijing, which allows speakers to transmit a pleasant and relaxed sensation. The translator of this novel, *La Colmena*, is from the Chinese capital, that is why we can find a flexible use of *erhuayin* in this translation. For example, in the expression *jugar a su partidita* ('play his cards'), *partidita* is diminutive of *partida* ('game') and conveys the affection for cards. It is translated into the Chinese rendition as 玩上一圈儿牌 ('play a circle of cards'). This *er* softens the narrative tone in the Chinese translation and in this way, similar contextual effect is transmitted to the target readers.

The morphological verbal repetition is another Chinese linguistic form that would generate pleasant and harmonious connotation. For instance, by repeating the verb 喝 ('drink'), the expression 喝喝茶 ('drink and drink tea'), instead of 喝茶 ('drink tea'), could communicate a pleasant and informal

ambiance. This is an exclusive feature in Chinese and no similar morphological form could be found in Spanish or English. As such, the effects of the Chinese morphological forms might be lost in these two cultural contexts.

Despite of the above discussion, either *erhuayin* or the morphological verbal repetition could fulfill the Spanish connotative functions in all cases, especially when the diminutive conveys a negative connotation. The following is an example of such an instance:

(3) ST: Doña Visitación Leclerc de Moisés, por bautizar dos **chinitos** con los nombres de Ignacio y Francisco Javier, 10 pesetas. ('Mrs. Visitación Leclerc de Moisés, for baptizing two **Chinese children** with the names of Ignacio and Francisco Javier, 10 pesetas.'

TT: 比希塔森·莱克莱尔克·德莫伊塞斯夫人，用伊格纳西奥和弗朗西斯科·哈维尔两个名字为两个**中国孩子**做了洗礼，奖 10 比塞塔。 ('Mrs. Visitación Leclerc de Moisés, for baptizing two **Chinese children** with the names of Yi Ge Na Xi Ao and Fu Lan Xi Si Ke Ha Wei Er, 10 pesetas.')

The term *chinitos* is diminutive of *chinos* ('Chinese'), in addition to signifying Chinese children, it is a euphemism for these Chinese newborns, to whom Mrs. Visitación considers unfortunate because they are not Catholic. This diminutive and euphemism could be understood as an implicature that communicates Mrs. Visitación's indifference and a lack of compassion towards non-Catholics nation.

Catholicism is not a prominent religious institution or belief system in China, in fact, most Chinese readers are non-Catholics. With the translation **中国孩子** ('Chinese children'), which is a non-morphological and non-connotative expression in Chinese, we have seen that the Chinese translator chose not to repeat the negative judgment by Mrs. Visitación of non-Catholics. This could be a deliberate reduction of the unfavorable attitude about his own country. This example demonstrates when the morphological form of the diminutive is removed, the implicature of Mrs. Visitación's attitude is also eliminated. Furthermore, in this example, the translator did not use *erhuayin* either for rendering this diminutive. It could be argued that even though Catholicism does not expand in China, issues related with religion are always perceived as sacred and solemn, hence the informal and colloquial connotation expressed by *erhuayin* that could not match the religious assumption of the Chinese translator and their readers.

4.4 Idiomatic expressions and sayings

In Molina's study (2006), sayings and phrases were included in the cultural-linguistic classification. And meanwhile, Mangiron (2008) included sayings, expressions and idiomatic phrases in the taxonomy. Since the boundaries between these idiomatic expressions are highly ambiguous and the objectives of this research do not necessitate having to distinguish between these three categories, all of these idiomatic expressions are incorporated in the present study. According to Timofeev (2006), the whole value of a saying or phrase does not amount to the sum of each component's meaning. From a pragmatic

perspective, idiomatic expressions also contribute to the emotional intensification of each statement, and the speakers usually use them to express their attitude (Schellheimer, 2015). Therefore, the following examples are presented to show the intensifying function of Spanish idiomatic expressions.

(4) ST: Estas **tías gordas y medio bebidas** suelen durar mucho. ('These **fat women and half-drunks** usually live long')

TT: 这种**半醉半醒的蠢女人**还往往活得很长。('This **stupid woman who is half-drunk and half-awake** often lives very long.')

In accordance with the context, this fat woman refers to Mrs. Rosa, who is overweight and, in the story, has an explosive temper. In the original text, *tías gordas* ('fat women') and *medio bebidas* ('half-drunks') are Spanish idiomatic expressions. *Gordo* ('fat') could be treated as a pun in the original Spanish text, which means 'overweight' and 'clumsy and silly' in this context, reflecting the humorous and ironic manner of the speaker. Moreover, *tías gordas* ('fat women') is an idiomatic expression, which may escalate the speaker's insult to the interlocutor. Through this formation stimulus, the contemptuous attitude of the speaker is reinforced in the original cognitive context.

In the rendition, *tías gordas* ('fat women') is translated as 蠢女人 ('stupid woman'), which only keeps its second signification 'clumsy and silly'. The punned meaning from the original Spanish text is lost when translated in Chinese. Furthermore, although 蠢女人 ('stupid woman') in Chinese also has a pejorative sense, it might be treated as an ordinary abusive remark rather than an idiomatic expression. The negative emotion of the speaker conveyed by the idiomatic expression would not be intensified as much as in the source text. This may suggest that when the idiomatic form is lost in the translation, the intensification implicature it carries also disappears, and thus the contextual effect reduces.

With regard to the other phrase, *medio bebidas* ('half-drunks'), which strengthens the scornful attitude through the Spanish idiomatic formation in the original context, it is rendered first by 半醉 ('half-drunks') and then added with a similar adjective 半醒的 ('half-awake'). The translator uses an amplification technique to make the rendition sound more like Chinese Chengyu and to imitate the intensification effect as it is generated in the original. Chengyu are Chinese idiomatic expressions, which are usually composed of four Chinese characters (Huang and Liao, 2011). In this case, the translator adds another two Chinese characters in order to imitate the structure of the Chinese idiomatic expression. The translation not only conveys the ironic sense of the original idiomatic expression, but also raises the accessibility of the intensification tone. By means of this, it reduces the processing effort of the target readers and enhances the emotional effect in the Chinese rendition.

(5) ST: - ¡Si vieses qué contenta me pongo cuando vienes tan pronto! ('-If you saw how happy I am when you come so early!')

- ¡Vaya! **A la vejez, viruelas.** ('-Well! **At old age, smallpox.**')

TT: ——“你知道每逢你回来得早我有多高兴!” ('You know how happy I am when you come back early!')

——“**嘎!上了岁数, 你倒来劲儿了。**” ('Well, **you are of advanced age, but on the contrary, you are animated**')

The previous example is how Mr. Roque responds to his wife, Mrs. Visitación, of whom he is not fond, when she manifests the contentment at his early return. The Spanish saying *a la vejez, viruelas* ('At old age, smallpox') means that someone of advanced age does things that do not correspond to the age. In addition to protesting the inopportune act of Mrs. Visitación, the idiomatic formation of the utterance intensifies Mr. Roque's mockery towards his wife for such behavior.

In the rendition, the phrase is reproduced as 上了岁数, 你到来劲了 ('you are of advanced age, but on the contrary, you are animated'). The expression 来劲了 ('animated') means to be full of enthusiasm. Additionally, 来劲了 ('animated') is a Chinese idiomatic expression, which has the same ironic connotation in the target context as the original does. The translator replaces the original saying formation with a commonly used Chinese idiomatic expression, which still intensifies the speaker's negative attitude. As a result, the accentuation of the original saying is maintained by the Chinese idiomatic form for the target readers, who may be able to perceive the same contextual effect of the original saying, without dedicating more processing effort.

5. Discussion

On one hand, as it is shown in the first example, when the proper names are related with the Catholic religion, which is not one of the contextual assumptions of Chinese readers, the religious values carried in each linguistic item are lost in the translation. These pragmatic properties are implicatures created by the author for the characterization of Mrs. Visitación. But the target readers lose this due to their different cognitive environments. As for the second example, the same cultural-linguistic item, *rojo* ('red'), is related with different contextual assumptions in each culture due to the different social development of Spain and China. Even though the reproduction, a new created term, 红鬼 ('red monster'), could also be understood as a pejorative term, it does not exist in the previous contextual assumption of Chinese readers. Hence, the translated term will require more processing effort, and the contextual effect reduces as well. These results demonstrate that the accessibility of the implicatures of the cultural-linguistic elements depends on the contextual assumptions of the target readers. If the Chinese readers do not have the corresponding contextual assumptions, like Catholicism or other social phenomena of Spain, it would demand more processing effort to decode the pragmatic values hidden in the cultural-linguistic manifestations.

On the other hand, when the Chinese linguistic form *erhuayin* or the morphological verbal repetition are used to duplicate the pleasant atmosphere, they may convey the same pragmatic value as the diminutive does in the original context. But, when the linguistic form is not maintained in the translation, as shown in the example (3), the implicature hidden in these cultural-linguistic items along with the negative attitude of Mrs. Visitación about the non-Catholics, would be missing, thereby reducing the context effect. As for idiomatic expressions in examples (4) and (5), when the translator tries to reproduce the original idiomatic expressions or sayings with Chinese Chengyu or other Chinese idiomatic forms, the contextual effect of the Chinese

readers is enhanced. And the contrary is proved when the idiomatic form is not maintained in the target text, like the first instance 蠢女人 ('stupid woman') of the example (4). This may be due to the fact that the contextual assumptions of the intensifying function of the Chinese idiomatic formations help reduce the processing effort. Above all, this may suggest that the original linguistic formation might convey the implicative stimulus. When the linguistic form is not maintained in the target text, the communicative clue for the implicature might also disappear. It would be complicated for the target readers to associate the translated items with the original pragmatic quality, and thus, diminish the contextual effect.

6. Conclusion

This article has pragmatically explored the reproduction of cultural-linguistic items with an original Spanish novel and its Chinese rendition. The relevance theory is incorporated as the orientation of this study, which mainly concerns the cognitive context in translation studies. In this sense, it compares the Spanish and Chinese contextual environments and explores the processing efforts that the cultural-linguistic instances take to generate the contextual effect in each context.

By such means, this article proves the implicative values conveyed by the cultural-linguistic issues, in particular, within the Spanish and Chinese cognitive contexts and verifies the convenience of the relevance theory in exploring such values in linguistic culture. The study clearly shows that the interpretation of the implicature conveyed by the cultural-linguistic instances requires similar cognitive context. The results might also indicate a regularity that the linguistic formation might be the stimulus that carries implicatures. When the linguistic forms are lost in the translation, the meaning it conveys may also disappear. The undertaking here demonstrates how the cases presented of many Spanish cultural-linguistic instances require more processing effort in the target context than it does in the original one due to the cognitive-contextual differences between Spanish and Chinese cultures.

Moreover, as indicated previously in the section 2.3, most of the existing pragmatic-oriented systematic approaches and classifications for linguistic culture are limited to external contextual features. Even though Wu's study (2013) concentrated on the cognitive contexts of China and Spain, this research is mainly within an audiovisual frame, while many of literary cultural-linguistic elements could not find a suitable category, like idiomatic expressions and so on. All these descriptions clearly illustrate the demand for a new cultural-linguistic classification and systematic study of Spanish and Chinese translation within a cognitive standpoint.

Finally, further research into a larger corpus is suggested to shed more light on the new cultural-linguistic taxonomy as well as to explore the cognitive relationship and contextual differences between Spanish and Chinese linguistic items. Moreover, supplementary research is recommended to interview the translators with the purpose of exploring their attitudes about the cultural-linguistic translation. In short, this article could enhance the cognitive-

contextual consideration given to the cultural-linguistic study, especially by exploring the contextual effects in Spanish and Chinese circumstances.

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