



A Study on the Imagery Translation of Animals, Plants and Cultural Relics in The Book of Songs from the Perspective of Relevance Theory

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Abstract: *The Book of Songs*, the first of the Five Classics, is a classic of Chinese culture. It is the first collection of realistic poetry in China and is the glorious starting point of realistic poetry in China. Imagery is the product of the poet's subjective emotions and objective objects, and is essential for the poet to convey his emotions and meanings. As one of the traditional Chinese cultural texts, *The Book of Songs* is rich in imagery of animals, plants and cultural relics, containing a rich cultural heritage and carrying the poet's deep emotions. Relevance theory is arguably the most popular cognitive pragmatics theory in recent years, focusing on human cognition and verbal communication. The purpose of this paper is to explore the study of animal, plant and cultural relic imagery in *The Book of Songs* based on the translation theory of relevance theory, to show the aesthetic value of the translation, and to promote the recognition of the artistic value of the traditional Chinese cultural texts represented by *The Book of Songs* and their dissemination to the outside world.

Keywords: animal, plant, and cultural relic imagery, the book of songs, relevance theory

1 Introduction

The Book of Songs is the first collection of poetry in China, containing 311 poems from the beginning of the Western Zhou Dynasty to the middle of the Spring and Autumn Period, also known as the Three Hundred Poems, which was called the Poem of the First Qin Dynasty, or the Poem of the Three Hundred Poems in its whole number. It also contains a total of 305 poems from the beginning of the Western Zhou Dynasty to the middle of the Spring and Autumn Period, and is divided into three parts in terms of content: wind, elegance, and ode. *The Book of Songs* is such a great book that it opens a paradigm for good traditional Chinese literature: in the river of time, good poems, and even good literature, are ultimately related to time, as they trickle down from their respective narrow valleys and merge into the broader ocean of time and space, flowing endlessly. In order to achieve the optimal translation effect, we study the translation of imagery based on the relevance theory in order to summarize certain methods and strategies.

This paper focuses on the translation of animals, plants, and cultural imagery in the poetry scriptures guided by relevance theory. The paper is divided into an introduction, a literature review, a theoretical framework, an application of relevance theory to the translation of animals, plants and cultural relics in the poetic scriptures, and a summary of the whole paper. Over the years, China has been committed to building a community of human destiny, emphasizing the integrity and interconnectedness of the world. China's insistence on the concepts of "harmony is precious" and "harmony among nations" is derived from both China's practical experience in domestic and foreign affairs over the years and its excellent traditional culture. Nowadays, unity, peace and development have become the themes of the world, and against this background, drawing on and translating the essence of China's excellent traditional culture has become an important force in accelerating the construction of a community of human destiny. The English translation of *The Book of Songs* has already passed through the stages of "interpretation of scripture", "interpretation of literary values" and "exploration of artistic techniques".

In the future, while continuing the previous research, we should respond to the needs of the times and place the focus of the retranslation of *The Book of Songs* on the promotion of world peace and the construction of a community of human destiny. By reinterpreting it from a reasonable perspective, we can explore the value of *The Book of Songs* from different aspects of the times and promote diverse interpretations of the English translation of it.

The Book of Songs is a mirror of the social life of the Zhou Dynasty, reflecting labor and love, war and servitude, oppression and resistance, customs and marriage, ancestor worship and banquets, and even celestial phenomena, landforms, animals and plants. The profundity and depth of Chinese culture is exquisitely reflected in the exquisite artistry of *The Book of Songs*. As a classic of Chinese culture, it has always been a literary favorite of scholars both at home and abroad, and different translations of it have been produced and widely disseminated, which has enabled readers around the world to gain a better understanding of the crystallization of traditional Chinese culture. It is a crystallization because it contains a great deal of symbolic and rich imagery of animals, plants and a few cultural relics, which serve as carriers for the complex emotions of joy, sorrow, grief and happiness given to it by the people of the time. Therefore, imagery, as a product of the poet's expression of subjective emotions and objective objects acting and reacting together, plays an



important role in the poet's expression of his inner feelings and thoughts. It can be said that without imagery poetry has no soul, and it is an important carrier for poets to express their emotions. The mood of poetry needs to be reflected by poetic imagery, otherwise the artistic effect expressed by the imagery in poetry will be greatly reduced. In a word, the translation effect of the imagery in the work has a decisive role in the final presentation of the work, and the translation of the imagery determines the emotional tone of the poem to a great extent.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Previous studies on *The Book of Songs*' Translation

At home and abroad, the study of the translation of *The Book of Songs* has a long history and a different focus. In China, English translations of ancient poems have always occupied an important position in Chinese translation studies. However, the foundation of research on the English translation of *The Book of Songs* is still weak. Since the 1970s, cultural and social factors have been incorporated into translation studies, which has enabled domestic translation scholars to gradually examine the humanistic activity of poetry translation in a broader socio-historical and cultural system, which has greatly enriched the research on poetry translation. This has greatly enriched the scope of poetry translation studies. The study of English translation of Chinese classical literature began in 1946 with the publication of a paper by Lv Shuxiang entitled *Miscellanea on English Translations of National Poems*, but the research on it has only just begun in the past two decades (J. Wen, S. J. Hao, 2016). In 1995, Shan Qin's paper, *The English Translation and Westward Spreading of The Shijing* introduced the spread of the Poetic Edda to Western Europe and outlined the translators and translations that emerged during the western transmission of the Poetic Edda according to the order of appearance of the English translations (Shan, 1995). 2003, Bao Yanxin's paper, *Brief Comment on English Translation Classic of Poetry* provided an introduction to the history of translation, which includes the translation by James Legge, a missionary from the Protestant Church. The history of translation of the Psalms, including translations by Protestant missionaries such as James Legge, Jennings, Allen, Giles, and Varley, and their contributions to the translation and dissemination of the Psalms, spans from the 17th century to the second half of the 20th century (Bao, Wang, 2003). In 2006, Li Yuliang and Wang Hongyin published a paper, *The History, Status quo, and reflection of the Shijing*, systematically compiled six studies on the English translation of the Psalms in China. In addition, domestic scholars have not only studied *The Book of Songs*, but also its translators. Among these translators are the highly placed foreigners William Jones, James Legge, Vallee, Pound, and Bernhard Carlgren, while domestic translations by Yang Xiangyi, Xu Yuanchong, Wang Rongpei, and others have been respected and rewarded. Compared to domestic ones, not many foreign scholars have studied the English translation of the *The Book of Songs*. American scholar Mary Patterson Cheadle once analyzed Pound's philosophical and political views embodied in his translation of the Psalms, and Professor Lauren F. Pfister once wrote five articles on James Legge's version of it, and made a unique study of James Legge's identity as a translator and the influence of his missionary status, religious outlook, and philosophical thought on the process of his translation of the Psalms. The influence of his missionary status, religious views, and philosophical thinking on the process and outcome of his translation of the Psalms is uniquely analyzed and elaborated (J. Wen, S. J. Hao, 2016). Ronnie Apter's work, *Digging for Treasure: Translation after Pound*, shows that Pound's creative translation is manifested in three main ways. Donald Davy, who has brilliantly described the "poetic language" used by Pound, argues that Pound gave life to the static poetic language.

2.2 Previous studies on Relevance Theory

Relevance Theory as a translation concept was first introduced in 1986 in the book *Relevance: Communication and Cognition* by Dan Sperber and Deidre Wilson. In this book, they systematically introduced the concept of "relevance theory" and synthesized the coding and reasoning models, and a revised version of the book was successfully released in 1995.

In China, the theory of association has been gaining more and more attention since the late 1980s. Shen Jianxuan was the first scholar to introduce association theory to China. In 1988, he published an article entitled *Relevance of Fast Communication and Cognition in Foreign Language Teaching and Research (Vol. 3)*, in which he gave a detailed introduction to the article co-authored by Sperber & Wilson (1986), which was the first step in the study of association theory in China and contributed to the initial understanding of the theory in China. Lin (1994) also introduced translation from the perspective of correlation in his book review, which aroused great interest in translation research from the perspective of correlation, and since then, the development of research on correlation theory has been extremely prosperous. After correlation theory was proposed, it has been used by domestic scholars to explain a large number of linguistic phenomena, but it is not limited to this, for example, in translation. In Zhang & Ge's (2013) study, in the relevance theory perspective, linguistic deviation is a way of inducing stimuli. The reader needs to infer the best contextual hypothesis of relevance from explicit information in order to understand it and thus achieve a correct understanding of the linguistic deviation phenomenon for successful communication. Song (2000) also shows that there is a certain correlation between speech acts, meaning that people make inferences based on different contextual hypotheses. In order to achieve the desired contextual effect, it is crucial to find the optimal correlation between discourse and context. In recent years, translation from the perspective of correlation theory has been intensively studied by many translation scholars in China, and some have even written relevant practice reports. For example, Tang (2020), under the guidance of relevance theory, discussed in depth about the solutions of six common difficulties in Chinese to English translation. Zhang (2020) also transposes the association theory to literary translation for application. Nowadays, in the 21st century, the importance of interpretation is gradually highlighted, and the correlation theory is also linked to it. Sun (2013)

believes that interpreters should search for relevant information through the cognitive environment, constantly infer the speaker's intention, and in the process combine the internal and external knowledge of the language in order to better understand the intrinsic meaning of the source language, and ultimately achieve an efficient way of translation. In order to better understand the inner meaning of the source language, the interpreter should ultimately achieve an efficient translation method, so as to provide the audience with the most effective interpretation method.

In foreign countries, the theory of correlation originated with the papers published by Wilson (1975), *Presupposition and Non-Truth-Conditional Semantics* and Sperber (1975), *Rudiments de rhetorique cognitive* and his sequel *Rethinking Symbolism*. Each of these works was devoted to a different perspective on the contextual factors in discursive verbal communication, and thus the theory of correlation was born with the co-authorship of the two authors, entitled *Correlation: Communication and Cognition* (1986). In 1991, the book *Translation and Relevance: Cognition and Context* was successfully published, which led the German linguist Gutt, also a student of Sperber and Wilson, to start a new journey of applying relevance theory to translation. In his book, he elaborates on the main ideas of association theory and applies them as the basis of his translation theory. These include the large role played by "descriptive and explanatory" (Gutt, 2000:35). Translation also provides a good platform for communication between the translator and the target audience (Gutt, 2000: 213-214), which makes the role of the translator very significant. Since the introduction of association theory, many scholars have explored association theory in terms of both semantic minimization and contextualism, and Carston (2011) introduces a conceptual understanding of the association principle and association theory. He disagrees with the view that association theory should belong to semantic contextualism theory, and instead emphasizes that it is a theory that leans towards pragmatism. In addition, the theory of association has two important principles: cognition and communication. Allot (2011) gives a very detailed introduction to the core concepts and main ideas of the theory of association and also explains the driving force behind this theory, the text not only emphasizes but also makes a clear distinction between the principle of associative cognition and the principle of associative communication, and finally the author distills four strategic approaches about the correct grasp of the theory of association. In recent years, the development of research on the theory of association has been increasing. Related extension studies have also been developed in related fields, such as optimal relatedness, conceptual meaning, and procedural meaning. Not only that, association theory also plays a role in interdisciplinary fields, including other fields such as psychiatry, neurology, psychology, and computer science.

In summary, there has been a diverse range and large number of international studies on relevance theory, which have proven to be important in both theory and practice. However, in contrast, there are fewer studies on translation; even fewer studies on the translation of Chinese and English subtitles. Meanwhile, domestic scholars, who mostly focus on linguistics and translation, not only provide a variety of research perspectives and methods, but also reveal the space for theories to be improved; providing a source of inspiration and caution for this study.

3 Theoretical Framework

3.1 Historical background and development of Relevance Theory

As I mentioned earlier, Relevance Theory was proposed by Dan Sperber and Deidre Wilson, and co-authored *Relevance: Communication and Cognition* in 1986, in which the concept of Relevance Theory was first introduced systematically, and then a revised version was published in 1995. Relevance theory combines the findings of contemporary cognitive science, philosophy of language, and human behavioral science, and continues to enrich the theoretical background, which is a critique and development of P. Grice's "conversational principle".

In 1979, Wilson first disclosed some elements of the idea of relatedness in *Modern Linguistics Results of the Chomsky Revolution* and emphasized that the concept of relatedness would play a central role in any theory of discourse interpretation. In 1981, Wilson and Sperber proposed to use the principle of relevance as a general umbrella for Grice's principle of cooperation and its guidelines, and in 1982, Sperber and Wilson published *Mutual Knowledge and Relevance in Comprehension Theory*, and in 1986, Sperber and Wilson published *Relevance-Communication and Cognition*. In 1986, Sperber and Wilson published *Communication-Conversation and Cognition*, discussing "communication," "reasoning," "relatedness," and some problems of linguistic communication. These marked the maturity of their theory of association.

Subsequently, a variety of studies have applied association theory, including discourse analysis, pragmatic phenomena analysis, semantic phenomena analysis, and rhetorical phenomena analysis. But Ernst August Gutt, a student of Sperber and Wilson, was the first scholar to combine the theory of relevance with translation. In 1991, in his book *Translation and Relevance*, Gutt proposed the theory of associative translation, which provided an unprecedented and fresh perspective for translation practice. In 1991, Gutt proposed the theory of associative translation in his book *Translation and Relevance: Cognition and Context*, providing an unprecedented and fresh perspective on translation practice.

In 1988, Shen JiaXuan published a paper entitled *Relevance of cogitation and cognition*, which first introduced association theory to China.

The development of Relevance theory has been fruitful, both in terms of its theoretical construction at the macro level and in terms of its application to the field of translation at the micro level. It can be said that the theory of association is gaining more and more attention in the academic field.

3.2 Main ideas of Relevance Theory

Communication is the signaling of stimuli or their processing by people in a particular cognitive context. Unlike encoding communication, association theory views communication as an explicit-inference process. Explicitly, the intention to

communicate something is explicitly expressed verbally or nonverbally, and is a communicative act of the speaker; inferentially, it is a communicative act of the addressee, which refers to the way of understanding. The success of the communication between the two parties depends on the ability of the addressee to infer the speaker's intention.

The theory of correlation is a philosophical reflection on verbal communication, which provides a profound reflection on philosophical thinking. Fundamentally, relatedness is not born from statements, but exists in the relations established between things, which belong to objective existence. Not only that, but the theory of correlation also has a certain universal connectedness. This is because correlation is objective and present everywhere and at all times. To be more specific, this relationship reflects precisely the universal connection between people's views on speech. In other words, relatedness.

The theory of human behavior is the second theoretical foundation of association theory. Zipf, a researcher of human behavior, developed this theory in his *Human Behavior and the Principle of Least Effort*. He asserted that the basic principle guiding human behavior is the principle of economy of effort (1949: 21-22). In layman's terms, this means that no matter what kind of activity each person engages in, it is not uncommon for them to want to use the least amount of effort in exchange for the best results. Thus, the principle of optimal relatedness was introduced by Sperber and Wilson, who were inspired by this idea, and it is also the core principle of relatedness theory. The main views on relevance theory are as follows:

a. The communicative view of relevance theory

Sperber and Wilson argue that communication and language are not necessarily tied together for use. From an objective point of view, language is not derived from communication. Even if it is different from communication, language can be its own thing. People's understanding of language is not only a process of constant refinement, but also a basic tool used to process and remember information.

b. Cognitive context of relevance theory

When it comes to the cognitive contextual aspect of association theory, it refers to the phenomenon of context as a mental construct assembled in the listener's brain. It consists mainly of a combination of vocabulary, encyclopedias and logical relations. The cognitive context changes from moment to moment depending on the person, because it is different for each person. People will show each other to achieve the purpose of communication and understanding they have in mind. The cognitive context of association theory it is to see the referent as a constant term, but to see the context as a changing thing, we can say that it is a context in motion. Cognitive context is a process of reconstruction and constant circulation by the listener, an effect achieved by constant selection in the process of language comprehension.

c. The principle of optimal relevance theory

Sperber and Wilson in 1986 proposed a principle of relevance theory, which says that every explicit communicative act should be conceived as having optimal relevance for the communicative act itself. By optimal relevance it is meant that linguistic communication achieves adequate and optimal contextual effects given the effort exerted. Minimal effort is a basic measure of human behavior; in other words, the best result is achieved with the least amount of effort. At the same time, two conditions are essential to achieve optimal relevance: first, the speaker's language must be sufficiently attractive to the listener; second, the listener must also maximize the contextual effect as much as possible while concentrating on listening. Only when the optimal relevance is served by the speaker's language can the listener be assured of a correct understanding of what is heard. Relevance theory, as a concept that exists as a cognitive theory is more powerful in terms of interpretation. In view of this, both domestic and foreign scholars speak about the use of relevance theory in their own fields.

4 Application of Relevance Theory to the Imagery Translation of Animals, Plants and Cultural Relics in *The Book of Songs*

4.1 Analyzing direct translation in *The Book of Songs*

Animals were closely related to human activities during the agrarian period. During the period from the early Western Zhou to the middle of the Spring and Autumn Period, when the Poetic Edda was produced, despite the great progress in productivity, materials were still scarce, which led to the diversity of animal imagery in the Poetic Edda, which is productive, regional, class-based, and moralistic. This paper aims to analyze the animal imagery in *The Book of Songs* through the direct translation method and explore the cultural connotations behind these animal imagery, so as to vividly and truly reproduce the production and ritual activities of the ancestors in the pre-Qin period, and enable the present generation to have a deeper understanding of the roots of traditional Chinese culture. According to the viewpoint of correlative translation theory, the direct translation method can preserve the linguistic characteristics and communicative clues of the original text to the greatest extent and strive to present the best contextual effect to the readers.

The following are multiple case analyses:

(1) Birds

The word "owl" means owl, and sometimes it can be called "scops" or "owl". It appears three times in the direct translation of bird imagery. The owl is a raptor that preys on small birds, mice, and other small animals, and ambles around at night, giving it a very mysterious feeling. The owl in *The Book of Songs* is often seen as an evil bird and is disliked by people, so this animal imagery is used as an example in Bin Feng - Owl.

Bin Feng - Owl

鸱鸺鸱鸺，既取我子，无毁我室。

Owl, Owl, hear my request,

And do not, owl, destroy my nest.
You have taken my young, Though I over them hung.

Chinese translation:

猫头鹰啊猫头鹰，你已抓走我小鸟，不要再毁我的巢。

This poem is considered to be the first allegorical poem in China. The owl is regarded as an ominous creature in Chinese culture, and here the owl appears as a raptor, expressing its fierce and bullying nature. In the poem, the author uses the encounter of the bird to express his discontent with the “owl” as a villain in a subtle way, and the vicious “owl” is the real identity of its symbol in the human world. In the mother bird’s miserable hooting and mournful lament, it conveys the anger of people who have been bullied and oppressed for a long time. The translator uses the direct translation method to preserve the imagery of the owl, allowing the reader to make relevant connections and better understand the original text in their own cognitive context.

(2) Rat

The direct translation of the rat is commonly used in the translation of *The Book of Songs*.

The Shih shoo

硕鼠硕鼠，无食我黍！

Large rats, large rats, let us entreat
That you our millet will not eat.

Chinese translation:

大老鼠呀大老鼠，不要偷吃我的黍！

The poem “Wei Feng - The Shih shoo” is a recognized poem against the exploiters in ancient and modern times, but there is a slight disagreement about the specific object of the accusation. The fat rat alludes to the exploiters of the time, and the struggle of the exploited class against exploitation has never stopped since mankind entered class society. The image of the rat is also considered ugly and cunning, with a tendency to steal food, so it is an appropriate comparison to the greedy exploiters, and it also shows the poet’s resentment against them. The use of direct translation can make it easier for readers to understand the content of the poem.

(3) Fish

One of the richly diverse groups of imagery in the *The Book of Songs* is the “fish” imagery, which can appear in the form of specific fish or exist as a general reference to “fish”. It can appear in the form of a specific fish or as a broad way to “fish”. It appears in nine poems. There are also many metaphors, such as a fish in a shallow pond, which is a metaphor for a man in troubled times who cannot escape the scourge of his country no matter how much he hides. Here is the example of “Xiao Ya - Ching yueh”.

Minor odes of the Kingdom - Ching yueh

鱼在于沼，亦匪克乐。

Shallow ponds on the fish small pleasure bestow;
To the bottom they dive, and there lie.

Chinese translation:

鱼儿生活在池塘里，并非让它乐逍遥。

The word “fish” is used here as an imagery to refer to the fact that the really talented people are not used. They have no talent and ambition but are buried, and in the face of the country’s decay, they can only say that they have more than enough power. They are worried about the future of the country and sympathize with the sufferings of the people, but they are ostracized and slandered by the villains. The use of direct translation here can make the reader understand better.

4.2 Analyzing indirect translation in *The Book of Songs*

Indirect translation refers to the translation according to the general meaning of the original text, without word-by-word translation. It is mainly used in cases where the original language and the translated language reflect great cultural differences.

The following are multiple case analyses:

(1) Sun Wa

Beautiful and delicate flowers have been a symbol of beautiful women since ancient times, and people often use the term “beautiful as a flower” to describe a woman’s good looks, thus expressing their praise for a woman’s appearance.

《郑风·有女同车》有女同车，颜如舜华。

There by his side in chariot rideth she, As lovely flower of the hibiscus tree.

Chinese translation:

姑娘和我同乘车，容貌就像花一样。

This is a love song between a nobleman and a woman in the Zhou Dynasty. This poem praises the beauty of the woman’s appearance and the beauty of her virtue in the tone of a man. Among them, the translation of Hibiscus uses the indirect translation method.

(2) Thatch

The new thatch of the plant and its shoots are called “thatch”, which can be used to describe the beautiful love between a man and a woman. The translation here is indirect.

《邶风·静女》

自牧归荇，洵美且异。

In the pastures a t’ e blade she sought, And she gave it, so elegant, rare.

Chinese translation:

郊野采萸送给我，萸草美好又珍异。

This is a love poem. Modern scholars generally believe that this poem is written about a young man and woman's secret date. The first catkins will grow into lush grass, but also contains the symbolism of love will develop more.

(3) Tribulus

It is an annual herb that is often seen as an unlucky sign because of its thorny fruit, and there is irony in the poem about political factors.

《邶风·墙有茨》墙有茨，不可埽也。

As grows on wall the tribulus,

And 'gainst the brush retains its hold.

Chinese translation:

墙上长满了蒺藜，无论如何都扫不掉。

This poem uses the thistles that cannot be swept away from the palace walls to suggest that the scandalous affairs in the palace cannot be covered up or erased, which has a strong ironic meaning.

4.3 Achieving contextual effects

In terms of cognitive pragmatics, context refers to a contextual environment and effect that the translator creates for the reader. In a nutshell, according to the theory of association, understanding discourse is a process of reasoning, creating hypothetical environments and conditions based on what you hear and see in order to find the best correlation between the two. It is only when the listener's assumptions and understanding match their reasoning that a communication can be said to be successful. Since the linguistic characteristics of the target language and the source language are different, it is easy to lose the meaning of the translation itself in the translation process. If the readers of the two languages set different contexts for themselves, there will be certain deviations in their understanding in different contexts, which is a great loss in the understanding of the translated text in this case. Therefore, in order to make the readers feel like they are in the original context and to experience the beauty of the text without any loss, the translator, who is responsible for achieving the maximum similarity of meaning with the original text, must build an identical context for the readers to enjoy, which is the most important thing. There are a large number of examples to prove this:

“五月斯螽动股，六月莎鸡振羽。”——《豳风·七月》

“In the fifth month, the locust moves its legs; In the sixth month, the spinner sounds its wings.”(James Legge)

In this verse, the “斯螽” represents the grasshopper and the “莎鸡” represents the weaver. Although we often see these two insects in our lives, their very ordinary movements reflect the four changing seasons of spring, summer, autumn and winter. Locusts are generally more mature and active. They make sounds with their legs in the fifth month; and weavers signal impending change by vibrating their wings. Because the translator describes the insects based on their real movements, we can easily understand what they mean by putting them into the original text. The clever use of verbs in the translation makes it easier for the target readers to infer the communicative context and to understand the poem better.

“窈窕淑女，琴瑟友之。”——《周南·关雎》

“With lutes, small and large, let us give her friendly welcome.” (James Legge)

The “琴” and “瑟” belong to plucked instruments that can be played together frequently. Whether in China or abroad, such instruments are easy to find. Just because the target readers are familiar with these instruments, the translator can make advance contextual cognitive assumptions before translation based on the fact that readers have a basic knowledge of this instrument. As a result, readers can fully appreciate the meaning of the poem based on their familiarity and context. In general, the translator needs to play a very important role in the process of explicit-reasoning, because he is both the audience and the person responsible for communication, so he has to anticipate his thoughts and feelings as a reader in advance. For the reader, if the translator clearly expresses the meaning directly in the original text, then the reader can easily understand the translator's intention, and those extra query work is not needed. Therefore, in order to give readers a good reading experience, translators must make assumptions about the original text on the basis of a full understanding of the original text, without misinterpreting the real purpose of the original author, and only in this way can the contextual effect be maximized under the perspective of association theory.

5 Conclusion

The main content of this paper has been analyzed and discussed within the previous chapters. The aim of this paper is to achieve the best relevance from the perspective of relevance theory by systematically analyzing the cultural connotations of the imagery of animals and plants in *The Book of Songs* to provide readers with a good cognitive contextual effect. This study examines the imagery in *The Book of Songs* from the following aspects: previous studies on the translation of it as well as previous studies on relevance theory and the theoretical framework of relevance theory. The necessary conditions for communicative success in translation are also successfully explored in order to achieve the cognitive contextual effect. With the advocacy of “Promote the global reach of traditional Chinese classic culture.”, the road of cultural communication to the world is getting wider and faster, and the study of it is also changing day by day. Throughout the research process, we have gained a deeper understanding of the connotation of imagery in *The Book of Songs*, and thus have come to appreciate more deeply the charm of traditional Chinese culture and the talent and wisdom of the ancients. In order to better explain the constructive role of relevance theory in the translation of the imagery of the Poetic Edda, the author suggests that more translations should be provided for reference; secondly, as a Confucian classic and the oldest

textbook in China, as a treasure of Chinese culture, it has always occupied a place in traditional Chinese culture. The oriental folklore and Chinese cultural connotations contained in the poem are undoubtedly a challenge for translators, so I suggest that more efforts should continue to be made in its research and analysis in order to increase its reference value. As a classic of Chinese culture, we have an obligation to pass it on in its entirety and spread it.

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