



THE VALUE OF KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER: A STUDY OF US-PUBLISHED TCM CLINICAL BOOKS VIA THE PERSPECTIVE OF INDIRECT TRANSLATION

Zhang Liying

Shanghai International Studies University, Shanghai, China

Shanghai University of Traditional Chinese Medicine, Shanghai, China

Email: zlying0818@126.com

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In the United States, there are three primary academic publishers specializing in traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) literature. This study focuses on two clinical TCM books published by one of these houses, Eastland Press. The first book is titled *Applied Channel Theory in Chinese Medicine: Wang Ju-Yi's Lectures on Channel Therapeutics*. This work, published in English by Jason D. Robertson, an American student of the renowned physician Wang Ju-yi, is based on Wang's original lecture notes. It has since been translated into French, German, Spanish, and Italian. Numerous students, inspired by this book, have traveled to China to study under Dr. Wang. To date, this is probably the only academic work on Chinese medicine to be translated and published in so many languages without receiving any government fundings. The second book is titled *Qin Bo-Wei's 56 Treatment Methods: Writing Precise Prescriptions*. This work outlines clinical treatment strategies summarized by the famous physician Qin Bo-wei. It was translated by Jason Blalack, an American, based on Qin's 1953 publication and the interpretations and commentaries provided by Qin's student, Wu Bo-ping. Because the original 1953 text is now difficult to find, the People's Medical Publishing House in China translated Blalack's English version back into Chinese in 2022, filling a significant gap in domestic literature. A comparison between the back-translation and its Chinese original source reveals significant terminological and structural shifts. Beyond lexical changes—such as the substitution of 'yin' (饮, fluid) for 'xian' (涎, oral mucus)—the back-translated version incorporates pithy four-character set phrases to encapsulate therapeutic principles, a feature not present in the original. Moreover, the original text was somewhat fragmented, often using dashes to link ideas. In contrast, the new back-translated version employs more sophisticated cohesive devices, resulting in an enhanced, logically integrated, and coherent discourse. It is noteworthy that the intermediary English translation maintains a high degree of fidelity to the original Chinese, aside from the addition of interpretations and commentaries. In contrast, a comparison between the back-translation version and the original source reveals a more pronounced translator subjectivity. This shift is likely a strategic effort to ensure marketability in China and to better align the text with contemporary TCM terminological system and clinical practice, while also reflecting the translator's expertise in Chinese medicine. Both TCM clinical monographs published by Eastland Press are intermediary translations, and they hold significant importance for the further dissemination of knowledge. The former has been translated into multiple Western languages, facilitating a broader dissemination of TCM clinical concepts. The latter, however, has been back-translated into Chinese, ensuring that the insights of renowned practitioners are better preserved and inherited within China.