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Chinese to English Translation Analysis of the Article Historical Origin and Spreading Process of Guidelines for Children

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Abstract: Translation is not merely a language conversion for the purpose of communication, but also a process of exchange and mutual dissemination between the two cultures. The Confucian introductory textbook, Guidelines for Children, is highly controversial in contemporary China, but few people actually pay attention to the history of its spreading since the Qing Dynasty until the present. In this context, the article, Historical Origin and Spreading, Process of Guidelines for Children, was chosen by the translator as the source text. Based on the translation practice, the translator adopts the framework of "Comprehension, Expression and adaptation" (CEA) proposed by Professor Li Changshuan to analyse the translation process. There are five parts in the report. Part I is the introduction; Part II is the description of the translation task; Part III introduces the CEA framework; Part IV is the main part—case analysis. Part V summarizes the reflections and enlightenment in the course of completing the task.

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Keywords: Guidelines for Children, Chinese-English Translation, CEA Framework, Culture, Spreading, History.

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Introduction

To answer the call of the Chinese Communist Party to spread the excellent Chinese culture in the world, the student translator chose the article, Historical Origin and Spreading Process of Guidelines for Children, as the source text of her translation practice from Chinese to English. After completing the translation practice, the writer wrote the translation report to analyse the translation process and further complete the task. The report mainly consists of five parts, providing a review of the application of translation strategies and the handling of difficult points during the translation process. Based on the CEA framework proposed by Professor Li Changshuan, in the fourth part, the writer elaborated with ten examples on how she understood the source text, conveyed the meaning, and made adaptations to vividly and accurately translate the original text into English.

I. Translation Task

A. Introduction

i. Background of the Translation Project

In the process of promoting cultural selfconfidence and inheriting traditional culture, China attaches great importance to the educational significance of traditional cultural classics. In the context of globalization. the international communication environment of excellent traditional Chinese culture is undergoing changes. With the acceleration of globalization and the rise of the "Chinese language craze", an increasing number of people have developed an interest in Chinese culture. Since the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC), China has further clarified the important role of enhancing cultural soft power in the construction of socialist modernization, and has proposed to continuously strengthen the international influence of Chinese culture. As an important part of excellent traditional Chinese culture, Guidelines for Children has also attracted the attention of overseas scholars and readers, showing the continuity, innovation and inclusiveness of Chinese civilization.

ii. The Source Text

The source text employed is the article Historical Origin and Spreading Process of Guidelines for Children published in the 5th issue of Education Research Monthly in 2017. The article discussed the historical origin of Guidelines for Children and its spreading process in different historical periods. The Confucian introductory textbook, Guidelines for Children, is highly controversial in contemporary China, but few people actually pay attention to the history of its spreading since the Qing Dynasty until the present. In fact, during the Qing Dynasty, Guidelines for Children was already a very popular textbook for children and a wiping-out-illiteracy textbook with value education purpose for the common people with little formal education. Its spreading was mainly a spontaneous choice made by the common folk, and the spread of Guidelines for Children in contemporary China is also mainly driven by the spontaneous efforts of the common folk. The task consists of two parts: translating the source text and writing the post-translation reflections.

iii. Significance of the Translation Project

Historical Origin and Spreading Process of Guidelines for Children showcases the controversies that Guidelines for Children has encountered during its spreading process. At the same time, it also reveals the excellent traditional Chinese culture such as Confucian thoughts, moral concepts, and philosophy of life contained within it, enabling more people to recognize and understand Chinese culture, and enhancing the influence and appeal of Chinese culture. In the process of translating, the translator accurately conveys its cultural connotations and values, trying her best to avoid cultural misunderstandings and misinterpretations. She hopes that her translation will contribute to promote mutual understanding and respect between Chinese and foreign cultures. In addition, this article showcases the social ideologies of China in different historical periods. This can help both domestic and international scholars understand the transmission and evolution of Confucian thoughts in different periods, and explore the rich cultural connotations and educational wisdom contained therein, thereby facilitating the dissemination of Chinese culture to the outside world.

II. Translation ProcessA. Pre-Translation Preparation

This article contains a large amount of classical Chinese as well as background knowledge related to *Guidelines for Children*. The translator needs to read the source text seriously and ensure a complete and thorough understanding of it before proceeding with the subsequent translation work. Before starting the translation, the translator read the source text repeatedly and divided the article into four parts according to its content, and attempted to grasp the main ideas of each part, analyzing their language features as well as the key and difficult points. Then, the translator searched for a large number of relevant materials and pieces of literature and read them carefully to establish a relevant background knowledge framework. Assisted by these materials and framework, the translator comprehended

the source text as accurately as possible, and found answers to the problems connected with the key and difficult points one by one. Finally, she selected appropriate translation tools and determined the daily translation volume and the final translation time according to her general translation speed.

B. While Translation

To ensure the accuracy of the translation, the translator used many translation tools in the process of translation. When translating each part of the content, the translator first accurately rendered the classical Chinese into vernacular Chinese and used computer-aided software to translate it into English. Then, based on the initial translation, the translator revised and polished the text according to the stylistic features of the source text. For ambiguous sentences and terms, she also sought help from peers and supervisors to make the translation more accurate and comprehensible. In addition, to accurately convey some specialized terms from ancient China, the translator also took advantage of online resources, such as CNKI, Wikipedia, Baid, Google Search, and other websites, to verify uncertain professional words or terms. Moreover, the article contains a large number of titles of ancient Chinese enlightenment reading materials for children. The translator read relevant literature and discussed with her supervisor to find the accurate these expressions for titles, enhancing professionalism of the translation. Finally, to ensure the accuracy, readability, and consistency of the translation, the translator specifically created a glossary that included the titles of books and some specialized terms included in the article.

C. Post-Translation Revision

After completing the first translation draft, the translator invited her tutor to conduct proofreading and communicated with her about some problems faced in the process of translating. In the first revision, the translator modified the sentence structure and grammar of certain sentences in the article, especially parallel structures and sentences without subjects. During the revision process, the translator took the tutor's advice to add specific years in parentheses after event and dynasties to facilitate understanding for the target language readers. In addition, the translator carefully checked whether the titles of books appeared in the text were consistent throughout, ensuring the consistency of the translation. During the second revision, the translator provided more detailed translations for the names of ancient Chinese books. If transliteration was used, the Chinese title and an English annotation were added afterward. In the course of the third revision, the translator checked the translation word by word and sentence by sentence to ensure that it conformed to the expression habits of the target language and was smooth and natural.

III. Analysis Framework

A. The "Comprehension, Expression and Adaptation" (CEA) Framework

i. Comprehension

The translation should be based on translator's understanding of the source text, and it is the most important step in the process of translating. Professor Li Changshuan (2021: 75) proposed, "The translator's comprehension of the source text must be thorough and meticulous, and the degree should be close to, reach or even exceed that of the author, including understanding all the concepts and their interrelationships, as well as the structure and meaning of sentences, and the relationships between sentences and paragraphs." This implies that the translator must clarify the logical relationships and linguistic features of the source text, have knowledge of the relevant background information, and on this basis, grasp the key points of translation to achieve accurate translation.

In the report, the translator exemplified how she dealt with the difficulties in comprehension by paying attention to the Chinese culture-loaded words, titles of books, writings in classical Chinese and so forth.

ii. Expression

Professor Li Changshuan (2020: 26) argues that "on the one hand, the translator should fully express the meaning of the source text without any increase, decrease or distortion in meaning, and on the other hand, the translated text should conform to the expressive habits of the target readers." Therefore, based on the understanding of the source text, the translator needs to express the meaning of the source text accurately, naturally, and smoothly in the target language. Expression not only focuses on the accuracy of the language but also emphasizes its logic and readability. The translator needs to make appropriate adjustments and optimizations to the source text according to the target language and the needs of the readers, so that the translation is both faithful to the original text and conforms to the norms of the target language.

In the process of expression, the translator focuses on how to achieve "expressiveness". In this

report, the translator gives five examples to present how she attempted to tackle problems like translating titles of books, specific Chinese terms and classical Chinese, etc.

iii. Adaptation

Translation is not merely the conversion of language but also the transmission of culture. Different audiences have varying degrees of acceptance and comprehension abilities regarding translated texts. Therefore, translators need to adjust their translations according to the characteristics of the target language. Professor Li Changshuan (2021:75)stated "adaptation refers to the process of editing the source text through means such as omission, addition, and rephrasing when full equivalence(i.e. word-for-word translation) is unattainable or counterproductive to the purpose of translation." Thus, when aiming to ensure that the translation is understood and accepted within the target readers and to prevent misunderstandings or conflicts due to cultural differences, adaptation is a very effective approach.

In the case analysis, the report addresses adaptation from omission, transposition, division and implication to make the translation more coherent and realize accuracy.

IV. Case Study

A. Comprehension

i. Chinese Culture-Loaded Words

There are a large number of Chinese culture-loaded words in this article, and these words demonstrate remarkable Chinese cultural characteristics. How to translate them into English so that target language readers can accurately understand them is a difficult point. While translating these words, the translator should not only understand their meanings and retain their cultural characteristics, but also accurately convey them to target language readers on the basis of comprehension, with the aim of enhancing the readability of the translated text from the perspective of target language readers.

Part of the culture-loaded words are listed below

Chinese culture-loaded phrases	English Translation
国子监	the Imperial Academy
县丞	the assistant of county magistrate
知县	the County Magistrate
秀才	junior scholar
举人	middle-rank scholar
进士	top level scholar
主簿	registrar
训导	instructor
典史	constable
佐貳	deputy
佐杂	miscellaneous officials

Example 1

ST	在由进士、举人、生员组成的科举功名等级体系和由官级高低组成的官僚等级体系中,均处在末端
	o
MT	Within the hierarchical system of the imperial examination, composed of Jinshi (advanced scholars), Juren, and
	Xiucai, as well as the bureaucratic hierarchy based on official ranks, he was at the low end.
TT	Within the hierarchical system of the imperial examination, composed of top level scholar (Jinshi 进士), middle-
	rank scholar (Juren举人, a scholar who passed the provincial level examination in the imperial examinations
), and junior scholar (Xiucai秀才, a scholar who passed the county level examination in the imperial
	examinations) as well as the bureaucratic hierarchy based on official ranks, he was both at the lowest end.

Analysis:

First of all, "进士、举人、生员(秀才)" are three ranks of imperial examination degrees in ancient Chinese imperial examination system, corresponding to different levels of selection examinations and social statuses. 秀才means the person who passed the countylevel examination, obtained a basic academic title. 举人 means the person who passed the provincial-level examination, was qualified to be a reserve official. 进士 represents the highest honor in the participated examinations, directly in national governance. At first, the translator directly retained the result of machine translation without providing detailed explanations for these terms, which is likely to cause confusion or misunderstanding among target language readers. When revising the translation, with the help of her tutor, the translator carried out the English translation and added transliterations, Chinese characters, as well as detailed English interpretations. To a certain extent, this not only preserves the cultural characteristics of the source text but also accurately conveys the precise meanings to the readers of the translation.

ii. Titles of Books

There is a large number of titles of children's moral education textbooks in the article. Some of these titles do not have standard English translations, so it is a major challenge in the translation process to translate these titles accurately.

Part of the titles are listed below.

Book titles in Chinese	Book titles in English
《 三字经》	Three-Character Primer
《 百家姓》	Hundred Family Surnames
《 千字文》	One Thousand Character Primer
《 千家诗》	An Anthology of Poems
《 增广贤文》	The Wisdom of Ancient Aphorism
《 名贤集》	Collected Better-Known Sayings
《 朱子家训》	the Family instructions of Zhu Zi
《 小儿语》	Xiao'er Yu (Words given to Children)
《 孝经》	The Book of Filal Piety
《西铭》	Hsi Ming or Western Inscription
《太极图说》	Taichi T'ushuo
《文昌帝君阴骘文》	The Tractate on the Unseen Judgement, by The Chinese literary god
《教子训女歌》	Songs for Teaching Sons and Daughters

Example 2

ST	《 文昌帝君阴骘文》
TT-1	Wenchang Dijun Yin Zhi Wen
TT-2	The Tractate on the Unseen Judgement, by The Chinese literary god(Wenchang Dijun Yin Zhi Wen文昌帝君阴骘文)

Analysis:

The "阴骘" are a very typical Chinese culture-loaded word. It signifies that although God does not speak, He silently monitors people's good and evil deeds in places unseen and metes out rewards and punishments accordingly.(He Lifang, 2011) In the initial version, the translator simply translated the title directly, neglecting its underlying meaning. During the process of revision,

she discovered that Suzuki Teitaro had translated the abbreviated title of the book, 《 阴骘文, as *Yin Chih Wen: The Tract of the Quiet Way*, using a combination of direct translation and annotation. However, in order to completely translate the title of this book, the translator and her tutor searched for a great deal of relevant literature and communicated about the problem. Eventually, they jointly decided to combine Suzuki

Teitaro's translation and opted for the title *The Tractate on the Unseen Judgement, by The Chinese literary god* (Wenchang Dijun Yin Zhi Wen文昌帝君阴骘文).

iii. Writings in Classical Chinese

Example 3

ST	李毓秀"从党冰壑游几二十年,守师说不敢变。"
MT	Li Yuxiu "studied with his teacher, Dang Binghe, for about two decades, strictly adhering to his teacher's
	instructions and never daring to make arbitrary changes."
TT	Li Yuxiu "studied with his teacher, Mr.Dang Binghe, for about two decades, strictly adhering to the Neo-
	confucian theories taught by his teacher, and did not make any changes arbitrarily."

Analysis:

In the initial translation, the translator did not accurately understand the meaning of the original text. Therefore, she agreed with and retained the result of machine translation. The misunderstanding mainly lies in the latter half of the sentence, "守师说不敢变". Firstly, the specific content involved in "师说" was not mentioned. For readers who are not familiar with the Chinese cultural background, it may be impossible for them to fully understand the profound meaning of "师说". Secondly, "不敢变" indicates Li Yuxiu's adherence to

his teacher's philosophical ideas and he did not make any changes arbitrarily. Under the guidance of her supervisor, the translator added "Neo-confucian theories" in the second draft, clarifying the specific content of "师说". This helps readers understand that the teachings that Li Yuxiu followed were the Neo-Confucianist thoughts.

B. Expression

i. Translation of Colloquial Words

Example 4

ſ	ST	将具体的问题变成"上纲上线"的政治议题
Ī	TT-1	specific issues were transformed into highly politicized topics.
Ī	TT-2	specific issues were overinterpreted and overanlyzed to become highly magnified political topics.

Analysis:

The phrase "上纲上线" in the source text is a Chinese idiom that typically refers to the act of elevating specific issues to a political level and subjecting them to excessive interpretation and criticism. This expression is very vivid in the Chinese context, but it may be difficult for readers unfamiliar with Chinese cultural background to understand. In the initial translation, the translator used "highly politicized," which conveyed the core

meaning but did not fully capture the connotations of "overinterpret" and "overanalyze" implied in "上纲上线." This might have made the translation seem somewhat general. Taking cues from her tutor's instruction, the translator added "overinterpreted and overanalyzed" in the revised version, making the translation more detailed and specific, and thus more accessible to readers.

ii. Cohesive Method

Example 5

ST	能够更好地着力研究民众的实际道德生活,从而用切实可行的道德理论指导他们的生活,为优化人际
	道德关系,移风易俗,改变社会风气,改造国民性,提高中华民族的道德素质作出贡献。
TT-	It can help us focus better on studying the actual moral life of the people, and then guide their lives with practical
1	moral theories, in order to make contributions to optimize interpersonal moral relations, change social customs,
	improve the social atmosphere, reform the national character, and enhance the moral quality of the Chinese
	nation.
TT-	It can help us focus better on studying the actual moral life of the people, thereby guiding their lives with practical
1	moral theories. This not only contributions to optimizing interpersonal moral relations, changing social customs
	and improving the social atmosphere, but also effectively reforms the national character, and enhances the moral
	quality of the Chinese nation.

Analysis:

In the source text, several purposes are presented in a parallel relationship. When translating, it is important to focus on cohesive methods and the use of conjunctions. In the first version, the translator simply

translated the source text, ignoring the use of conjunctions, making the sentence monotonous and lacking in logicality. In the second version, the translator used the structure of "not only...but also", making the translation more logical and readable.

iii. Using Precise Words

Example 6

ST	带着花岗岩脑袋去见周公去了
TT-1	He went to meet the Duke of Zhou with a mind as stubborn as a donkey.
TT-2	He refused to give up his "dream" of restoring the slave society with a mind as stubborn as a donkey until his death.

Analysis:

In the source text, "花岗岩脑袋" (granite-minded) is a vivid metaphor, implying that someone's mind (way of thinking) is as stubborn or peculiar as that of "花岗岩" (very hard, difficult to change). When translating this phrase, it is necessary to convey its inherent meaning and also select precise words to express the vividness and humor of the source text. By using the metaphor of "as stubborn as a donkey", the translator vividly expresses the meaning of "a stubborn mind", which is closer to the vividness of the original text. Such a translation is logically coherent, vivid and easy to understand. The Duke of Zhou (周公) was a

significant contributor to the slave system in the Western Zhou Dynasty, and Confucius admired him greatly. The original text criticizes Confucius for his desire to restore the slave society. "见周公" implies that Confucius, remained stubbornly the idea of restoring the slave system until his death. Therefore, in order to help readers better understand the meaning of 见周公", the translator directly employs a free translation to convey its inherent meaning.

C. Adaptation i. Omission

Example 7

	Γ
ST	《 (光绪)直隶绛州志》则记载"太平王御史奂曾往复质疑,极倾倒焉。"王御史奂是指王奂曾。
TT-	Annals of Jiangzhou in the Guangxu Reign of the Qing Dynasty also records: "Wang Huanzeng, the imperial
1	inspector of Taiping County, frequently discussed and raised questions with him, expressing great admiration for
	his insights." Imperial Censor Wang Huanzeng refers to Wang Huanzeng.
TT-	Annals of Jiangzhou in the Guangxu Reign of the Qing Dynasty also records:"Wang Huanzeng, the imperial
2	inspector, a native of Taiping County, firequently visited Mr. Li Yuxiu and asked for advice in acdemic studies,
	expressed great admiration for his academic insights."

Analysis:

This passage mainly describes relevant information about the imperial censor Wang Huanzeng. When translating this classical Chinese sentence, the translator has already conveyed the identity information of imperial censor Wang Huanzeng, so there is no need to specifically elaborate on it again. This also reflects the difference between Chinese and English expressions.

Chinese is more euphemistic and often requires specific clarification of certain information. However, such expressions would seem redundant and lengthy when used in English. Therefore, appropriate omission is necessary.

ii. Division

Example 8

ST	"孔孟之徒为了升官发财,一意提倡虚伪道德,实际上都是一批'被服儒雅,行若狗鼠(猪)',少廉无耻
	的伪君子,真小人。"
TT	"The followers of Confucius and Mencius, in order to advance in their careers and acquire wealth, stubbornly
	promote this hypocritical moral concepts. In fact, they are all a group of hypocrites who are dressed decently and
	appear learned and cultivated, but behave as despicably as beasts. Actually, they are shameless people, true
	hypocrites and real villains."

Analysis:

There are several parallel descriptions in the source text. These descriptions are closely connected. However, in English, if it is directly translated into a long sentence, it may seem cumbersome and difficult to understand. Therefore, the translator employed the translation technique of "division", breaking down the

complex sentence in the original text into several shorter sentences. This not only enhanced the readability of the translation but also strengthened the expressive effect, making the translation more vivid and in line with English expression habits.

iii. Transposition

Example 9

ST	第二,过度质疑《弟子规》本文之外的写作目的、道德动机和个人利益,过度假设了《弟子规》具有欺
	骗、说谎的性质。

TT Second, *The Annotations and Criticisms on Guidelines for Children* excessively attack Li Yuxiu's writing purpose, moral motivation, and personal interests, as if *Guidelines for Children* was written just for the sake of deception and lying.

Analysis:

There is a parallel structure in the source text, and the translator has transformed it into a complex sentence through the method of transposition. This transformation of the structure makes the sentence more compact and the logic clearer. The word "question" in the original text is a verb, and the translator has translated it as "attack". This not only preserves the original meaning but also emphasizes the aggressiveness and unreasonableness of this kind of questioning. The phrase "excessive assumption" in the source text is translated as

"as if...", which is a structure of subjunctive mood used to express assumptions or speculations. This structure not only makes the sentence more natural but also conveys the meaning of "excessive assumption" in the original text more clearly. At the same time, the translator has translated the phrase "the nature of deception and lying" as "just for the sake of deception and lying". By adjusting the word order and choosing appropriate words, the sentence becomes more fluent.

iv. Amplification

Example 10

ST	或问诸书,尝曰:'《西铭》、《太极》相为表里,《西铭》言其当然,《太极》言其所以然。《西铭
	》犹《大学》,《太极》犹《中庸》也。,
TT-	When someone consulted him about these books, he often said, 'Hsi Ming(A classic text of Confucianism) and
1	Taichi T'ushuo complement each other. Xi Ming expounds on how things should be, while Taiji Tushuo explains
	why things are like this. So, <i>Hsi Ming</i> is similar to <i>The Great Learning</i> , and <i>Taichi T'ushuo</i> is similar to <i>The</i>
	Doctrine of the Mean.'
TT-	When someone consulted him about these Confucianist and Neo-confucianist books, he often explained, "Hsi
2	Ming (A classic text of Neo-Confucianism by Mr.Chang Tsai, also entitled Western Inscription) and Taichi
	T'ushuo (Explantion of the Diagram of the Sumpreme Ultimate, written by Chou Dun-yi) complement each other.
	Hsi Ming expounds on how things should be, while Taichi T'ushuo explains why things are like what they are.
	So. Hsi Ming is similar to The Great Learning, and Taichi T'ushuo is just like The Doctring of the Mean.'

Analysis:

The translator appropriately expands and explains the original text through the method of amplification. In the first translation, she simply translates "或问其书" into "these books", but in the revised translation, the translator adds "Confucianist and Neo-confucianist books", clarifying the nature and background of these books and helping readers better understand their academic context. The translator not only retains the transliteration of the book titles but also adds detailed explanations of the book titles, including the author, the English translation of the book title, and a brief description of the content. This amplification enables readers to more clearly understand the background and content of these books and avoids misunderstandings due to unfamiliarity.

CONCLUSION

A. Reflections

In this project, there are many classical Chinese and enlightenment textbooks for children, which poses a significant challenge to translation. The way classical Chinese is expressed differs greatly from modern Chinese. Although its concise and meaningful characteristics are rich in cultural connotations, they can also easily lead to ambiguities in understanding. For

example, when translating the titles of some ancient classic textbooks, relying solely on literal meanings often results in the loss of the original cultural background and deeper meanings. Only through in-depth research into the relevant historical background and cultural context can one accurately grasp the educational concepts and values contained in these titles. For instance, when translating "《 西铭", the translator looked into Chang Tsai's (张载,1020-1077) philosophical thoughts and his position in Neo-Confucianism during the Song and Ming dynasties. This enabled me to translate it as "Hsi Ming" and add information about the author and a brief description of the content to help readers better understand its cultural connotations. Although this process is time-consuming and labor-intensive, it greatly improves the quality of translation and avoids errors or inaccuracies caused by insufficient information. During the translation process, I realized that simply converting words from one language to another is far from sufficient. Translation is not only language conversion but also cultural transmission. For content with a profound Chinese cultural background, such as the Confucian ideas and moral concepts contained in children's moral education textbooks, it is necessary to skillfully integrate cultural annotations or explanations

into the translation to help target language readers better understand.

B. Enlightenment for the Translator's Future Academic Development

The project represents an unprecedented translation experience for the translator. When initially reading this source article, the translator spent a great deal of time consulting materials to understand the source text. During the process of translating, she constantly pondered over how to produce an accurate translation while retaining its features. After completing the project, the translator promptly engaged in reflection and drew several insights.

In future translation practice, the translator will continue to delve deeply into the historical and cultural contexts of the source texts. This not only aids in a more precise comprehension of the original but also enables her to convey its deeper meanings more effectively. For instance, when translating Confucian classics, she will refer more extensively to historical documents and academic research to ensure the accuracy and depth of the translation. Translation is a process of continuous learning and improvement. In future practice, she will continue to learn new translation techniques and methods to enhance her translation skills. Additionally, she will keep abreast of the latest trends in international cultural exchange to better adapt to the ever-changing demands of translation.

This translation practice may well become a crucial turning point in the translator's career, opening the door to a new academic field. She can transform her years of accumulated English knowledge and exquisite translation skills into a powerful tool, using them to create and write directly in English. Then she will be able to introduce the core concepts, traditional values, and rich cultural heritage of Chinese excellent culture to readers around the world in a more precise, efficient, and direct manner. This not only helps to break down the barriers of language and culture but also allows the world to gain a deeper understanding of the unique charm and profound significance of Chinese culture.

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