

names-can help bridge knowledge and cultural gaps (Zhang and Dong, 2020). However, such rewriting must be conducted cautiously: neither erasing source-culture logic for the sake of audience accommodation nor rigidly preserving original forms that hinder comprehension. Cross-cultural adaptation ethics therefore represents a form of careful adjustment, aiming to construct a dynamic balance between communicability and authenticity rather than one-sided cultural export or one-sided accommodation.

3.3 Ethics of value negotiation: seeking balanced expression amid cultural conflict

In international communication, shenrong culture inevitably enters a field of value contestation involving scientific knowledge, traditional medical beliefs, market logic, cultural identity, and consumer ethics (Chen, 2023; Kadier et al., 2025). Conflicts may arise from divergent views on animal welfare, differing health beliefs, or contrasting interpretations of medicinal symbolism. For instance, while deer antler is regarded in its original context as a highly valuable tonic with deep symbolic meaning, in societies with strong animal-protection consciousness, the very notion of using animal-derived medicinal materials may provoke doubt or resistance (Zhang and Dong, 2020; Kadier et al., 2025). In such complex contexts, translators are not merely linguistic mediators but also coordinators of value. The ethics of value negotiation therefore emphasizes that translators must avoid allowing any single discourse to dominate, nor should they absolutize traditional culture. Instead, they should seek translatable, mutually accessible expressive spaces among differing discursive systems (Ding and Zheng, 2024).

This negotiation process often requires multiple mediation strategies, such as combining foreignization and domestication, adding supplementary explanations, and transparently presenting product origins and cultural background, with the goal of fostering understanding without erasing differences (Zhang and Dong, 2020; Ding and Zheng, 2024). Studies indicate that for culturally dense TCM concepts, retaining key terms in transliteration and providing detailed annotation helps prevent “cultural erasure” while creating opportunities for learning and engagement in the target culture (Chen, 2023; Min et al., 2024). In international marketing of shenrong products, clearly presenting harvesting methods, sustainability practices, and benefit-sharing mechanisms not only addresses ethical concerns in target societies but also prevents cultural appropriation and one-directional commodification (Ichim and De Boer, 2021; Liu et al., 2021). From the perspective of value negotiation ethics, the goal of translation is not to create a superficially harmonious, unified narrative but to provide a dialogic space where multiple values may coexist-allowing different cultures to reach “mutually intelligible” understandings amid reasonable divergence.

4 Directions for Case Analysis

4.1 Comparative analysis of Chinese–English translations in international Shenrong brands

In the global dissemination of shenrong products, comparative analysis of Chinese and English translations provides an effective entry point for revealing translation-ethics issues. Many brands, when targeting overseas markets, adopt strategies such as “medicalization”, “maximizing functional claims”, or “cultural de-emphasis” to align with the cognitive habits and regulatory environments of target consumers. For instance, while Chinese packaging for ginseng or deer antler products often highlights traditional notions such as “strengthening the body and supporting essential qi”, English translations are frequently reduced to vague expressions like “boost energy” or “support vitality”. Such simplification weakens the depth of knowledge and philosophical nuance rooted in TCM theory within shenrong culture. Research on international ginseng products shows that brands often use labels such as “wild”, “forest-farmed”, or “semi-wild” when translating variety, origin, or cultivation methods. However, these terms lack standardized definitions across brands, creating consumer misunderstandings regarding product authenticity and value (Ichim and De Boer, 2021; Liu et al., 2021). This type of “technically sophisticated but semantically ambiguous” translation exemplifies the tension between cultural-representation ethics and market-driven discourse.

Furthermore, many international brand translations exhibit what may be called “structural cultural omission”, in which the cultural roles and narrative functions of the original text are ignored. For example, symbolic references,