

Ramadilla et al., 2024). In the context of shenrong culture, this could involve providing explanatory translations for complex terms, adding functional descriptions to formula names, or reframing narratives using conceptual frameworks more familiar to the target culture (Ding and Zheng, 2024). While such strategies enhance communicative accessibility, they risk being co-opted by market logic: in advertising or packaging contexts, an overemphasis on audience accommodation may lead to cultural oversimplification or strategic vagueness, undermining the theoretical integrity and value density of shenrong culture (Hu, 2024).

6 Translation Strategies from the Perspective of Value Negotiation

6.1 Responsibility-oriented ethics: reinforcing culturally authentic representation

Within a value-negotiation framework, a responsibility-oriented ethical approach emphasizes that translators bear the duty to preserve the authentic cultural representation of shenrong in cross-cultural communication. This responsibility extends beyond textual “fidelity” to the complete transmission of the traditional knowledge system, value orientations, and medical philosophy embedded in shenrong culture (Zhang and Dong, 2020). Traditional expressions such as “tonifying qi and nourishing blood”, “benefiting essence”, “harmonizing Yin and Yang”, and “strengthening the righteous to consolidate the root” are not mere functional descriptions but conceptual crystallizations grounded in centuries of TCM theory and practice, carrying specific diagnostic logics and life philosophies (Wu et al., 2013). Thus, responsibility-oriented ethics requires translators to avoid reducing these terms to single biomedical descriptors of modern functional effects. Instead, translators should employ explanatory translation, framework-based interpretation, or annotations to bridge semantic gaps and preserve the knowledge structure of the source culture (Zhang and Dong, 2020). For example, adding clarifying phrases such as “rooted in traditional East Asian medical cosmology” or “a concept derived from holistic regulatory principles” can enhance intelligibility without sacrificing cultural depth.

However, strengthening cultural authenticity does not mean ignoring potential misunderstandings or cultural conflicts. In practice, certain culturally rich terms or formula names rendered through direct translation without contextual explanation often confuse or alienate international audiences unfamiliar with TCM or animal-derived medicinal traditions-especially when deer antler is involved, as it may trigger ethical and emotional sensitivities (Wu et al., 2013). Responsibility-oriented ethics is therefore not a call for rigid preservation but for “interpreted fidelity”: providing appropriate background information and conceptual clarification without diluting cultural meaning, enabling target audiences to understand why these terms matter and how they maintain coherence within the source culture. In doing so, translators not only safeguard the identity of shenrong culture but also promote respect for-and understanding of-diverse medical traditions within global health discourse (Zhang and Dong, 2020; Kadier et al., 2025).

6.2 Communication-oriented ethics: enhancing communicative effectiveness and audience understanding

A communication-oriented ethical approach emphasizes that translation, as an act of intercultural communication, should optimize expression according to context and audience characteristics, while maintaining the integrity of core cultural structures. Shenrong culture is disseminated internationally through diverse channels-including advertisements, packaging, e-commerce listings, exhibition texts, museum materials, popular-science writing, and policy documents-each with distinct audience expectations, cultural literacy levels, and informational needs (Han, 2025). Consequently, translation strategies must be highly adaptive and context-specific.

For advertising texts, translators may structure the content around “functional positioning-safety-traditional background”, using regulation-compliant neutral phrasing such as “helps support vitality/energy” instead of unverified therapeutic claims, thereby balancing compliance with cultural signaling (Ichim and De Boer, 2021; Han, 2025). For museum or educational materials, translators should employ annotations and concise theoretical explanations to help audiences understand the systemic logic behind terms like “tonifying qi” or “harmonizing Yin and Yang”. For academic or museum-style texts, maintaining terminological precision and narrative coherence is essential, allowing for greater informational density and theoretical depth (Ramadilla et al., 2024).