

Research on English translation strategies of *CCTV Spring Festival Gala* program lists based on Functional Equivalence Theory—from the perspective of intangible cultural heritage dissemination

Na Wang

Chongqing Institute of Foreign Studies, Chongqing, China

2558440669@qq.com

Abstract. In 2024, the Spring Festival was inscribed on the *UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity*. The *CCTV Spring Festival Gala* serves as an important vehicle for presenting Spring Festival related culture to the world, in which the English translation of program lists plays a vital role in cross-cultural communication. Taking Eugene Nida's Functional Equivalence Theory as the theoretical foundation, this paper establishes a three-dimensional evaluation system consisting of meaning equivalence, stylistic equivalence and reader's response equivalence. On this basis, it carries out a diachronic comparative study on official English translations of *CCTV Spring Festival Gala* program lists from 2024 to 2026. This paper analyzes the evolution of translation strategies before and after the Spring Festival obtained intangible-cultural heritage status and discusses how translators handle culture loaded items in program titles. It further explores the effects brought by format adjustments such as the adoption of all capital texts in program lists. The findings demonstrate that Functional Equivalence Theory offers valid guidance for translating gala program lists. Strategy adjustments under the intangible cultural heritage background help deliver cultural connotations and facilitate cross-cultural understanding. This research can offer references for translation practice and global communication of similar intangible cultural heritage-related texts.

Keywords: *CCTV Spring Festival Gala* program list, Functional Equivalence Theory, translation strategies, cross-cultural communication, international dissemination of intangible cultural heritage

1. Introduction

On December 4, 2024, *Spring Festival – Social Practices of Chinese People to Celebrate the Traditional New Year* was successfully inscribed on the *UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity* [1]. As the core carrier of Spring Festival culture, the *CCTV Spring Festival Gala* has embraced new opportunities for international communication after the inscription. The gala has evolved from a domestic cultural phenomenon to a display window of human cultural heritage, becoming an important component of global cultural diversity.

As the core carrier for the overseas communication of the *Spring Festival Gala*, the English translation of program lists directly affects overseas audiences' understanding of program texts and cultural connotations, and determines the effective delivery of cross-cultural information. Following the successful inscription of the Spring Festival, the cultural communication value of the gala has been further highlighted. Program lists act as an important medium to transmit traditional culture when the gala reaches overseas audiences and conducts cross-cultural exchanges, and the quality of translation fundamentally shapes overseas viewers' cognition of the profound cultural meanings behind each program. Therefore, it remains to be further discussed whether translators have adjusted relevant strategies to adapt to the brand-new communication environment after the Spring Festival was listed as world intangible cultural heritage.

Against such a background, this paper takes Eugene Nida's Functional Equivalence Theory as the analytical framework, and conducts a diachronic comparative research on the official English translations of three editions of gala program lists: the 2024 edition (pre-inscription), the 2025 edition (the first gala after inscription) and the 2026 edition (the deepening period of inscription). Existing academic researches concerning the translation of *Spring Festival Gala* mostly focus on full program texts and gala discourses, while few studies touch upon the translation of program lists, lacking diachronic exploration on the evolution of translation strategies before and after the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) inscription. Targeting this research gap, this paper selects typical translated examples of program lists to analyze the evolutionary track of translation strategies. It mainly explores whether program names, cultural symbols and thematic implications can be fully transmitted across languages, and whether equivalence can be achieved between source text information and target readers' comprehension.

Taking Functional Equivalence Theory as the research tool, this paper systematically solves the core problem of how English translations of gala program lists accurately deliver the literal meanings and cultural cores of programs under the ICH background. It provides references for translation practice in the overseas communication of ICH-themed *Spring Festival Gala*, and promotes the global understanding and shared inheritance of Spring Festival culture.

2. Literature review

2.1. Functional Equivalence Theory

Proposed by American translation theorist Eugene Nida, Functional Equivalence Theory is a classic theory in translation studies. It has been verified through years of practice and boasts wide adaptability to various text types, laying solid theoretical support for translating gala program lists. Nida holds that translation aims to realize communication and information exchange between two languages, and meaning equivalence outweighs formal equivalence [2]. This core viewpoint directly responds to the core demand of gala program list translation: helping audiences accurately grasp program themes, styles and cultural connotations.

In practical translation practice, Functional Equivalence Theory has achieved effective information transmission in various text types. For political document translation, translations guided by this theory reproduce original information via functional equivalence and unify comprehension among different readers [3]. For film and television subtitles, flexible methods including free translation, amplification and omission are adopted to maintain loyalty to the source text while avoiding audience confusion, realizing precise information delivery [4]. When translating cultural classics, the principles of meaning equivalence and reader response equivalence balance cultural inheritance and readability, ensuring complete transmission of core source information [5]. For commercial promotional texts, the theory balances professional accuracy and cross-cultural adaptation, optimizing information logic and improving international communication effects

[6]. Existing research based on Functional Equivalence Theory mainly covers political documents, film subtitles, literary works and commercial materials. Studies related to theatrical and gala programs mostly analyze full program content, dialogues and subtitle translation, yet no specialized research treats program lists as independent communication texts. Diachronic research on the English translation of *CCTV Spring Festival Gala* program lists is still blank in academic circles.

2.2. Research on the *CCTV Spring Festival Gala*

In recent years, the overseas influence of the *CCTV Spring Festival Gala* has expanded continuously. The 2024 Gala was broadcast in 200 countries and regions, with 100 million video views; the 2021 *Henan Spring Festival Gala* accumulated over 3 billion online clicks thanks to works such as *Night Banquet in the Tang Dynasty*, which reflects foreign audiences' strong interest in traditional Chinese cultural elements [7]. Academic circles have produced rich research results concerning Gala program innovation, digital technology application, cultural expression and international communication.

In terms of program innovation, scholars discuss modern reinterpretation of fine traditional Chinese culture on the Gala stage, including innovative presentation and youth-oriented transformation of dances, folk customs and national trend elements. In terms of technological empowerment, studies explore how artificial intelligence, XR and digital twin technologies reshape the Gala's stage effects, narrative logic and spatial layout [8]. In terms of international communication, existing literature analyzes global narrative modes and cross-cultural dialogue of the Gala, pointing out that the Gala has shifted from one-way cultural output to empathetic communication with expanding global coverage [9]. Generally speaking, existing research fully recognizes the innovative achievements of the Gala in digital technology, cultural translation and global storytelling, yet most studies ignore translation-related research, especially program list translation. Only a small number of papers indirectly mention Gala translation issues. Li analyzed bilingual subtitles of the *Henan Spring Gala* under functional translation theory without touching program lists [10]. Zhang et al. stated that translation is essential for the Gala's international spread but did not conduct targeted research on program list texts [11]. As the first medium for foreign audiences to know the Gala, program lists undertake the task of introducing program names and cultural elements, and their translation quality directly affects cross-cultural communication results [12]. The absence of systematic research on Gala program list translation fails to match the growing overseas dissemination demand of the Gala, so this paper fills the research gap and offers practical suggestions to improve the cross-cultural communication accuracy of the *CCTV Spring Festival Gala*.

2.3. Research on program list translation

The *CCTV Spring Festival Gala* program list belongs to multi-modal composite texts with informative, expressive and vocative functions [13]. As recorded in *Handbook of Translation Studies*, translations of such multi-functional texts should prioritize cultural and communicative equivalence rather than pure formal linguistic matching [14]. Popular theoretical frameworks adopted for program list translation include Skopos Theory, Functional Equivalence Theory, and New mark's semantic and communicative translation theory. Gala program lists feature dense information, abundant culture-loaded words, concise wording and strong cross-cultural attributes, which require translation strategies that balance accurate information delivery, cultural inheritance and foreign readers' acceptability. Functional Equivalence Theory prioritizes meaning transmission, standardizes stylistic expression and pursues equivalent reader response, which perfectly fits the core translation requirements of Gala program lists and guides proper handling of culture-loaded terms, sentence restructuring and cross-cultural adjustment.

3. Research methodology

Eugene Nida put forward Dynamic Equivalence (later renamed Functional Equivalence). Its core idea is that target readers' reaction to translated texts should be roughly consistent with source readers' reaction to original works [15]. Nida defined translation as reproducing source information with the closest and most natural equivalent expressions in target languages, arguing that meaning equivalence is more important than formal equivalence in linguistic communication. In subsequent theoretical supplements, Nida also acknowledged the importance of appropriate stylistic form. In summary, Functional Equivalence Theory emphasizes consistent reader feedback between source and target languages, attaches importance to cultural adaptation, and takes equivalent communicative functions in target culture as the core translation standard.

Skopos Theory centers on the rule that translation purposes determine translation strategies, taking the skopos principle as the highest standard [16]. However, overemphasis on purposes may lead to selective omission of source information. In Gala program list translation, simply catering to foreign readers' comprehension may cut off traditional folk customs and cultural symbols, failing to realize the deep goal of intangible cultural heritage communication.

Peter Newmark's semantic translation and communicative translation are complementary approaches [17]. Semantic translation pursues faithfulness to original meanings but easily results in rigid expressions hard for foreign readers to understand. Communicative translation focuses on reading experience yet may weaken unique Chinese cultural features to cater to overseas audiences [18]. When translating Gala program titles carrying traditional cultural meanings, rigid literal translation under semantic theory confuses foreign readers, while excessive domestication in communicative translation erases cultural authenticity. Neither theory can balance information integrity and audience acceptability.

By contrast, Functional Equivalence Theory is the most suitable theoretical framework for Gala program list translation. Its core definition—reproducing source information from semantics to style with the closest natural target equivalents—unifies meaning equivalence, stylistic equivalence and reader response equivalence [19]. It guarantees complete delivery of literal and implicit cultural meanings while maintaining original stylistic characteristics and consistent reading experience. In practical translation, it avoids information loss caused by purpose supremacy and meaning distortion caused by rigid form or over-domestication, effectively solving the core contradiction between cultural inheritance and cross-cultural comprehension in Gala program list translation [20]. Nida's translation theory points out that equivalence covers lexical, syntactic, textual and stylistic layers, and translations should deliver both surface lexical information and deep cultural connotations, with meaning taking priority over form [21]. This paper collects official 2023–2026 CCTV Spring Festival Gala program lists and conducts quantitative scoring and diachronic comparison on their English translations. Based on Nida's Functional Equivalence Theory, reader response theory and existing quantitative evaluation research on functional equivalence, this paper constructs a three-dimensional evaluation system including meaning transmission, stylistic adaptation and reader comprehension. The evaluation dimensions and weight distribution are as follows:

3.1. Meaning equivalence (4 points)

The concept of meaning equivalence originates from *The Theory and Practice of Translation* by Nida and Taber, which regards semantic transmission as the primary task of translation, including accurate literal matching and complete delivery of implicit cultural connotations [22]. Nida further supplemented in *Language, Culture and Translating* that conveying cultural connotations constitutes an indispensable part of meaning equivalence, and translations should fully reproduce core cultural information without redundancy or

missing content [23]. This dimension judges whether translations completely cover the literal and cultural meanings of program titles without deviation or omission.

3.2. Stylistic equivalence (3 points)

Stylistic equivalence is rooted in discourse analysis and functional equivalence standards for text style. Cohesion and coherence act as core evaluation indicators [24]. Translations need to match the concise, information-intensive stylistic features of Gala program lists, retain original text logic and expressive habits, and avoid fragmented or mismatched forms to realize consistent textual attributes between source and target versions.

3.3. Reader response equivalence (3 points)

Reader response equivalence takes overseas audiences' reading experience as the evaluation standard. Nida claims that qualified translations should be smooth and easy to understand, enabling target readers to generate similar feedback as source readers. Translations should supply sufficient cohesive clues to lower cross-cultural comprehension barriers and achieve equivalent communication effects based on shared cognitive background.

3.4. Weight setting basis

The full score of the evaluation system is 10 points: 4 points for meaning equivalence (priority of semantic transmission), 3 points for stylistic equivalence (standardized text presentation), 3 points for reader response equivalence (audience-centered communication effect). This weight distribution complies with academic norms of Functional Equivalence Theory and matches the practical features of Gala program list translation.

4. Case analysis and discussion

4.1. Analysis of translation evaluation for 2024 Gala programs

This paper conducts a quantitative evaluation on the translation quality of *2024 CCTV Spring Festival Gala* program list from three dimensions, with specific scoring results shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Translation evaluation of 2024 SFG program list

Chinese Program Name	Official English Translation	Meaning Equivalence (4)	Stylistic Equivalence (3)	Reader Response Equivalence (3)	Total Score	Rating
舞乐新疆	Sing and Dance for Xinjiang	3	3	1	7	Qualified
冬日暖阳	A Warm Winter Sun	3	3	1	7	Qualified
健康到到令	Embracing Health	2	3	2	7	Qualified
共庆中国年	Ring in Chinese New Year Together	3	3	2	8	Excellent
像你这样的朋友	A Friend Like You	3	3	1	7	Qualified
锦鲤	Dance: Koi Carp	4	3	3	10	Excellent

Table 1. Continued

山河诗长安	Poem for the Landscape of Chang'an	2	2	2	6	Qualified
嘿少年	Hey, Young People!	3	3	3	9	Excellent
跃龙门	Leaping over the Dragon Gate	4	3	1	8	Excellent
晒share	Let's Share	2	3	2	7	Qualified
年锦	New Year Brocade	4	3	1	8	Excellent
别开生面	Musical Tale: A Display of Regional Foods	2	2	2	6	Qualified

(1) 舞乐新疆 (Sing and Dance for Xinjiang): The translation accurately conveys the literal and regional cultural meaning of the program. It conforms to foreign expressive habits with minor subtlety defects, scoring 3 for meaning equivalence. The wording is concise and fits the program list style, getting full marks for stylistic equivalence. The expression is straightforward for overseas audiences to grasp the core theme, only lacking emotional resonance, so it gains 1 point for reader response equivalence. Total score 7, rated Qualified.

(2) 冬日暖阳 (A Warm Winter Sun): The translation precisely matches the literal text and delivers warm emotional connotations with slight depth deficiency, scoring 3 for meaning equivalence. Concise and matching the warm style of the program, it gets full stylistic points. Foreign readers can easily understand its implication without barriers, with 1 point for reader response equivalence. Total score 7, rated Qualified.

(3) 健康到到令 (Embracing Health): The translation captures the core theme of health though it slightly deviates from literal wording (2 points for meaning). Concise and suitable for program lists (3 points). Direct expression makes overseas audiences quickly understand the theme (2 points). Total score 7, rated Qualified.

(4) 共庆中国年 (Ring in Chinese New Year Together): The translation fully delivers festival connotations and adopts idiomatic festival expressions for western readers, only with minor detail defects (3 points). Slightly wordy yet clear (3 points). Readers instantly grasp the festival theme without confusion (2 points). Total score 8, rated Excellent.

(5) 像你这样的朋友 (A Friend Like You): Accurately expresses friendship emotion with subtle expressive weakness (3 points). Simple and matching the warm program tone (3 points). No comprehension obstacles for foreign audiences (1 point). Total score 7, rated Qualified.

(6) 锦鲤 (Dance: Koi Carp): Fully transmits literal meaning and the auspicious symbolism of koi, clearly marking the dance category with no information loss (4 points). Standard and brief labeling format (3 points). Foreign audiences easily link koi with good fortune (3 points). Full score 10, rated Excellent.

(7) 山河诗长安 (Poem for the Landscape of Chang'an): Delivers the cultural meaning of ancient Chang'an with insufficient depth of cultural transmission (2 points). Slightly lengthy yet coherent (2 points). Readers can infer the core theme with minor comprehension cost (2 points). Total score 6, rated Qualified.

(8) 嘿少年 (Hey, Young People!): Captures the youthful spirit with mild emotional weakness (3 points). Colloquial and matching the lively program style (3 points). No reading barriers for overseas audiences (3 points). Total score 9, rated Excellent.

(9) 跃龙门 (Leaping over the Dragon Gate): Fully transmits the implied meaning of striving and success with complete literal matching (4 points). Concise and standard (3 points). Readers can infer the implied metaphor despite western cultural differences on dragon images (1 point). Total score 8, rated Excellent.

(10) 晒share (Let's Share): Accurately reflects the core theme of sharing with slight literal mismatch (2 points). Brief and lively (3 points). Easy to comprehend for foreign audiences (2 points). Total score 7, rated Qualified.

(11) 年锦 (New Year Brocade): Delivers the auspicious implication of brocade for new years with subtle lack of delicate cultural expression (4 points). Standard brief format (3 points). Readers can understand the core concept with weak cultural resonance (1 point). Total score 8, rated Excellent.

(12) 别开生面 (Musical Tale: A Display of Regional Foods): Captures the food-themed core with partial literal deviation (2 points). A little lengthy yet complete information (2 points). Readers can grasp the program type and theme with extra reasoning cost (2 points). Total score 6, rated Qualified.

4.2. Analysis of translation evaluation for 2025 gala programs

The translation evaluation results of 2025 *CCTV Spring Festival Gala* program list are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2. Translation evaluation of 2025 SFG program list

Chinese Program Name	Official English Translation	Meaning Equivalence (4)	Stylistic Equivalence (3)	Reader Response Equivalence (3)	Total Score	Rating
Counting Stars	COUNTING STARS	4	3	3	10	Excellent
太平有象	DANCE: ELEPHANTS OF PEACE	3	3	2	8	Excellent
潮起舞英歌	YINGGE DANCE: SONG OF HEROES	3	3	2	8	Excellent
笔走龙蛇	MARTIAL ARTS: THE PEN WRITES THE DRAGON AND SNAKE	3	2	2	8	Excellent
喜上枝头	DANCE: MAGPIES ON THE TREE	3	3	1	7	Qualified
一起China Fun	CHINA FUN TOGETHER	2	3	2	7	Qualified
秧BOT	DANCE: YANGGE BOT	3	3	2	8	Excellent

(1) Counting Stars (COUNTING STARS): Full matching of literal meaning without information loss (4 points). Uniform all-capital format fits the 2025 program list standard (3 points). Universal expression brings identical reading experience for global audiences (3 points). Full score, Excellent.

(2) 太平有象 (DANCE: ELEPHANTS OF PEACE): Accurately conveys the peace and auspicious cultural implication with minor expressive defects (3 points). Clear genre labeling and standard format (3 points). Foreign audiences easily associate elephants with peace with weak cultural resonance (2 points). Total score 8, Excellent.

(3) 潮起舞英歌 (YINGGE DANCE: SONG OF HEROES): Transliteration preserves the unique intangible cultural identity of Yingge Dance, supplemented by explanatory translation of its heroic connotation with tiny

detail defects (3 points). Concise labeling with minor sentence stiffness (3 points). Readers instantly grasp the nature of this folk dance without extra lookup (2 points). Total score 8, Excellent.

(4) 笔走龙蛇 (MARTIAL ARTS: THE PEN WRITES THE DRAGON AND SNAKE): Integrates the calligraphy and martial arts core meaning with complete information delivery (3 points). Clear genre label, slightly lengthy expression (2 points). The martial arts context offsets western negative stereotypes of dragons; readers can infer the artistic metaphor (2 points). Total score 7, Qualified.

(5) 喜上枝头 (DANCE: MAGPIES ON THE TREE): Literal translation is complete yet omits the core auspicious cultural meaning of magpies in Chinese culture (3 points). Standard genre marking (3 points). Western readers lack the cultural background of magpie as a lucky symbol and need extra reasoning (1 point). Total score 7, Qualified.

(6) 一起 China Fun (CHINA FUN TOGETHER): Captures the cross-cultural interaction theme with minor fluency defects (2 points). Brief and lively all-capital format (3 points). Mixed Chinese-English wording is easy for foreign audiences to interpret (2 points). Total score 7, Qualified.

(7) 秧 BOT (DANCE: YANGGE BOT): Transliteration retains Yangge's folk heritage identity and clearly highlights the robot-tech fusion feature (3 points). Standard dance labeling (3 points). Readers instantly understand the integration of traditional folk dance and technology (2 points). Total score 8, Excellent.

4.3. Analysis of translation evaluation for 2026 Gala programs

The detailed dimensional scoring and overall evaluation of 2026 CCTV Spring Festival Gala program list translations are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Translation evaluation of 2026 SFG program list

Chinese Program Name	Official English Translation	Meaning Equivalence (4)	Stylistic Equivalence (3)	Reader Response Equivalence (3)	Total Score	Rating
武BOT	MARTIAL ARTS ROBOTS	4	3	3	10	Excellent
绘新春	ACQOBATICS DRAWING SPRING	3	3	3	9	Excellent
丝路古韵	DANCE:ANCIENT RHYTHM OF THE SILK ROAD	3	3	3	9	Excellent
吉良	SONG:JILIANG THE AUSPICIOUS ATEED	4	3	3	10	Excellent
喜雨	DANEC:AUSPICIOUS RAIN	3	3	3	9	Excellent
踏地为节	DANCE :STEP TO THE RHYTHM	2	3	3	8	Excellent

(1) 武 BOT (MARTIAL ARTS ROBOTS): Meaning equivalence (4 points): According to Nida's functional equivalence theory, the translation accurately conveys the core connotation of "martial arts technology", corresponding to the literal and implicit meanings of "Wu BOT", without key information loss, with only minor room for optimization in expression delicacy. Stylistic equivalence (3 points): The translation is concise and standardized, clarifying core attributes without redundant program type labeling, which fits the concise

and informative stylistic characteristics of gala program lists with natural discourse cohesion. Equivalent reader response (3 points): The translation is intuitive and straightforward, enabling overseas audiences to fully comprehend the meaning of martial arts robots without cross-cultural barriers, achieving ideal cross-cultural communication effects and satisfying reader response equivalence requirements. The translation realizes comprehensive functional equivalence and reaches the excellent level.

(2) 绘新春 (ACROBATICS: DRAWING SPRING): Meaning equivalence (3 points): The translation accurately matches the literal meaning of creating new year scenes and completely delivers the festive cultural connotation of welcoming the Spring Festival, with no key information loss, only lacking subtlety in expressing dynamic painting movements. Stylistic equivalence (3 points): Marked with a clear program genre label, the translation is concise, standardized and well-structured, highly consistent with the stylistic norms of official gala program lists with smooth discourse cohesion. Reader response equivalence (3 points): The expression is intuitive and easy to understand. Overseas audiences can accurately grasp the core content of interpreting Spring Festival culture through acrobatics based on genre labeling, with no comprehension obstacles and good cross-cultural communication effects. The translation achieves complete information transmission and excellent comprehensive quality.

(3) 丝路古韵 (DANCE: ANCIENT RHYTHM OF THE SILK ROAD): Meaning equivalence (3 points): The translation faithfully reproduces both the literal meaning and the profound cultural connotation of the Silk Road, a classic Chinese cultural symbol, fully conforming to Nida's requirements for meaning equivalence. Stylistic equivalence (3 points): Despite a slightly longer sentence pattern, the translation is overall concise and fluent with clear program type marking, perfectly adapting to the stylistic characteristics of gala program lists. Reader response equivalence (3 points): The Silk Road is a globally recognized cultural symbol. Overseas audiences can accurately understand the program's theme of inheriting ancient Silk Road culture through dance, with no comprehension barriers and favorable reader feedback. The translation achieves effective functional equivalence in cross-cultural communication.

(4) 吉良 (SONG: JILIANG THE AUSPICIOUS STEED): Meaning equivalence (4 points): The combination of transliteration and free translation accurately retains the proper noun attribute of "Jiliang" and fully interprets its core cultural connotation of an auspicious sacred steed, realizing zero loss of literal and cultural information. Stylistic equivalence (3 points): With standard song genre labeling and smooth integration of transliteration and explanatory translation, the expression is standardized and concise, fully fitting the stylistic specifications of official program lists. Reader response equivalence (3 points): The dual translation method eliminates cross-cultural comprehension barriers, enabling overseas audiences to clearly understand the program's auspicious thematic implication and unique cultural connotation, achieving equivalent reader response between Chinese and foreign audiences. The translation reaches a full score in comprehensive evaluation.

(5) 喜雨 (DANCE: AUSPICIOUS RAIN): Meaning equivalence (3 points): The translation accurately corresponds to the literal meaning of festive rain and fully conveys the cultural connotation of auspicious rain heralding a prosperous spring and harvest, with only slight deficiency in emotional expression refinement. Stylistic equivalence (3 points): The standardized dance labeling and concise expression conform to the unified stylistic norms of gala program lists, with natural discourse cohesion and no redundant content. Reader response equivalence (3 points): The intuitive expression allows overseas audiences to quickly grasp the program's festive and auspicious theme, with no cross-cultural comprehension obstacles and stable communication effect. The translation completes effective cultural and information transmission and reaches the excellent level.

(6) 踏地为节 (DANCE: STEP TO THE RHYTHM): Meaning equivalence (2 points): The translation accurately expresses the literal meaning of stepping rhythmically and conveys the core artistic connotation of traditional folk rhythmic dance, yet fails to fully interpret the profound cultural implication of traditional Chinese folk ritual and rhythmic culture, resulting in incomplete cultural information transmission. Stylistic equivalence (3 points): The translation features clear genre labeling, concise wording and standardized format, highly matching the stylistic characteristics of gala program lists. Reader response equivalence (3 points): The fluent and intuitive expression enables overseas audiences to easily understand the program's dance theme with no comprehension barriers, achieving good reader response effects. Despite minor deficiencies in in-depth cultural transmission, the core information is completely delivered, reaching the excellent comprehensive level.

5. Conclusion

This study examines the English translations of the *Spring Festival Gala* programme for the years 2024–2026. Drawing on the theory of functional equivalence, it conducts a systematic analysis of the overall quality, translation strategies and communicative effectiveness of these translations, considering dimensions such as information transfer, stylistic norms, cultural adaptation and audience reception. The findings indicate that, as the international dissemination of Spring Festival culture continues to intensify, the English translations of the programme have shown a steady improvement in terms of accuracy, standardization and readability. These translations successfully preserve the core information of the programmes, accurately conveying their themes, cultural significance and artistic characteristics. Furthermore, the treatment of cultural specialties, traditional imagery and programme genres is increasingly aligned with the cognitive habits of overseas audiences, thereby effectively reducing barriers to cross-cultural understanding.

In terms of style, the English translations of the programme list generally maintain a concise, formal and consistent tone, meeting the stylistic requirements for cultural dissemination texts. The text structure is clear and the information hierarchy well-defined, enabling the efficient transmission of information within a limited space. In terms of cultural dissemination, the English translation focuses on accurately presenting traditional Chinese festival culture, folk symbols and artistic forms. Through appropriate cultural adaptation and contextual supplementation, it enables overseas audiences to better understand the cultural significance behind the programmes, thereby enhancing the effectiveness and appeal of the dissemination of Chinese culture abroad.

At the same time, this study also found that the English translation of certain cultural imagery still suffers from oversimplification and gaps in cultural information, whilst the English translations of some programme titles still have room for improvement in terms of consistency and stability. Overall, the English translation of the Spring Festival Gala programme has largely met the requirements for functional equivalence in terms of information equivalence, stylistic equivalence and audience receptivity, and is well-suited to serving the practical needs of disseminating Spring Festival culture abroad. However, the decision to adopt an all-caps format from 2025 onwards, whilst enhancing visual distinctiveness, also poses potential issues regarding readability and approach ability.

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