

The History, Development, and Prospect of Standardization in English Translation of TCM Terminology

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DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2024.803221S>

Received: 11 August 2024; Accepted: 22 August 2024; Published: 30 August 2024

ABSTRACT

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) is an extensive and profound component of Chinese cultural heritage. In the context of globalization, TCM has ascended onto the international stage, significantly influencing global health and wellness and garnering worldwide attention. This article employs a literature review methodology to elucidate the global impact of TCM and highlight the importance of contributions to the translation and standardization of TCM. The pivotal role played by scholars and practitioners in this domain is instrumental in shaping the future of TCM. The article examines the historical trajectory and evolution of the English translation of TCM terminology, critically analyzing the roles and contributions of various individuals and organizations engaged in the standardization of TCM terminology translation. The study proposes a promising framework for developing global standards in TCM terminology translation by synthesizing their translation methodologies, principles, standards, and guiding philosophies.

Keywords— TCM terminology; English translation; TCM history, development, and prospect phrases

INTRODUCTION

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) represents a profound scientific and technological discipline that has been meticulously preserved and continues to evolve within its distinct framework. Over millennia, TCM has made substantial contributions to the health and well-being of the Chinese population and has increasingly disseminated globally through various channels, with significant involvement from contemporary scholars and practitioners. The standardization of TCM terminology is essential for its internationalization, as it facilitates the global transmission of knowledge accrued over centuries. However, since TCM originates from China and employs a source language deeply rooted in ancient Chinese culture, numerous specialized terms are unfamiliar to those outside the field of TCM. This linguistic and cultural disparity poses a considerable challenge to TCM translation, a challenge that is being addressed by ongoing scholarly efforts. The need to clarify terminology for academic study, clinical research, and communication regarding TCM is critical. Establishing a universally recognized international standard for TCM terminology translation is imperative. Contributions from medical experts, linguists, researchers, and global organizations are pivotal in addressing this challenge. This article provides a comprehensive review of the historical trajectory and development of English translations of TCM terminology, examining the roles and contributions of various individuals and organizations involved in the standardization process. It synthesizes their translation methodologies, principles, standards, and guiding philosophies, proposing a promising framework for developing global standards in TCM terminology translation.

THE HISTORY OF STANDARDIZATION IN THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE TERMINOLOGY

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) constitutes a conventional scientific and technological discipline that has been meticulously preserved and continues to evolve within its unique system. For millennia, it has made significant contributions to the health of the Chinese populace and has been progressively disseminated abroad through various means. Translating TCM into other languages could further facilitate this dissemination, with

the efficacy of these translations directly influencing the global propagation of TCM.

The history of foreign translations of TCM can be traced back to the 8th century A.D. when Chinese medical knowledge was introduced into the Arab world. However, a more detailed examination of the English translation of TCM terminology can be derived from the period when Chinese medicine was introduced to Europe, starting in the mid-17th century with the arrival of missionaries in China. This marked the beginning of the history of TCM translation into foreign languages, encompassing an initial phase dominated by foreign translators where terminologies lacked uniformity. Subsequently, Chinese translators began to engage in the translation process, emphasizing the standardization of English translations of TCM terms. Despite these efforts, most English translations of TCM terms still need to be standardized [5].

The historical trajectory of English translations of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) terminologies can be delineated by examining the distinctive characteristics and accomplishments of TCM translation at various stages. Both Chinese and international contributors have played pivotal roles in standardizing the English translations of TCM terminologies. This article elucidates the contributions of domestic and international experts, scholars, and pertinent institutions.

Early English Translations of Chinese Medicine (17th Century - late 1970s)

The translation of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) into English commenced early, with the initial Western publications on Chinese medicine focusing predominantly on acupuncture. In the early 17th century, acupuncture, noted for its unique therapeutic properties, was introduced to the West before other aspects of TCM. The translation activities of this period can be bifurcated into two distinct phases. The first phase spanned from the mid-17th century to the late 19th century, marking the nascent dissemination of TCM in Europe, which progressed at a relatively sluggish pace. During this period, translations were primarily undertaken by Western missionaries in China and Western physicians accompanying colonists to Asia.

In the subsequent century, they witnessed a considerable expansion in the dissemination of TCM in Europe, with scholars beginning to translate more comprehensive materials. More than 50 books on Chinese medicine have since been published in English, although the primary focus of research and translation remained on acupuncture, with occasional works on moxibustion [6]. The translations of this era were primarily introductory and often found in missionaries' diaries, letters, biographies, and research writings. The divergent intellectual and conceptual backgrounds of the missionaries engaged in translation, and their varying levels of Chinese language proficiency and cultural understanding led to differing interpretations of the original texts, resulting in occasional mistranslations. The predominant translation methodology was phonetic, supplemented by a modest amount of direct translation and other forms.

The second phase of translating Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) occurred from the early 17th century to the late 1970s, characterized by increasingly frequent exchanges between China and the West in medicine. During this period, nearly 200 books and journals on Chinese medicine were published in English. Prominent foreign experts and scholars, including Manfred Porkert, Paul U. Unschuld, and Joseph Needham, contributed significantly to translating TCM terms [1].

Manfred Porkert, born in the Czech Republic in 1933, earned a Ph.D. in Chinese studies from the University of Paris and served as the director of the Institute of East Asian Studies at the University of Munich, Germany [14]. He was a distinguished expert in TCM, renowned for his Chinese and Western language proficiency. Porkert lauded Chinese medicine as a modern and future-oriented discipline, a mature science, and a genuine life science. His extensive collection of Chinese books included nearly 10,000 volumes on Chinese medicine alone. Porkert's works, such as "Diagnostics of Chinese Medicine," "Basic Theory of Chinese Medicine," "Clinical Pharmacology of Chinese Medicine," and "Prescriptions of Chinese Medicine," have been highly acclaimed in Europe and the United States for their rigorous research and high academic value. They have been reprinted multiple times [3]. He believed that Western medicine could not solve all medical issues and that the world needed Chinese medicine to enhance and improve modern medicine. Porkert devoted his life to promoting Chinese medicine in the West and made outstanding contributions to TCM. He initiated the establishment of the International Society of Chinese Medicine and delivered numerous lectures in Europe,

America, and Asia to advance the internationalization of Chinese medicine. He was the first author to cogently discuss TCM terminology and the necessity for precision and consistency in TCM translation [2]. Porkert endeavored to establish a standardized and practical terminology system for Chinese medicine using solely Latin words, as reflected in his books "The Theoretical Foundations of Chinese Medicine" and "The Essentials of Chinese Diagnostics," published in 1974 in Germany [7]. Porkert used more Latin than the corresponding English translations of TCM terms in these works because he believed Latin words could accurately convey the original meanings and avoid ambiguity. Despite the potential accuracy of his standardized terminology system, the terms he used were challenging to read, recognize, remember, and popularize due to the significant differences between contemporary Latin usage and the old Latin of the 17th century [8]. Consequently, Porkert's terminology system is challenging to understand and apply in teaching, research, and communication among Chinese practitioners, rendering it impractical for adoption in modern times.

Paul U. Unschuld, born in August 1943 in Germany into a family of pharmacists, is renowned for his research in Chinese and European medicine, mainly focusing on the history of medical thought and ethics. Unschuld's approach to translating Chinese medical masterpieces involves meticulous examination of peripheral knowledge, such as the historical context and dating of the texts. When translating Chinese medical terms, he thoroughly investigates the context of their usage and traces the creators or early users of these terms. Unschuld advocates for respecting the cultural characteristics of TCM by adhering to the original form, maintaining fidelity to the source text, and situating the terms within their historical context. He opposes the rigid application of modern Western medical terminologies. He promotes direct translation to preserve the original metaphorical imagery of the Chinese medical language, which often draws from analogical images [14].

Unschuld's translation philosophy is epitomized in his 2011 translation of the "Huangdi Neijing Suwen" (The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine), co-authored with Zheng Jinsheng of the Chinese Academy of Traditional Chinese Medicine. Unschuld contends that TCM translations should rigorously consider classical texts and avoid isolating medical texts from their historical context. He argues against using modern medical terminologies to translate or interpret ancient medical texts, asserting that the ideas and theories in Chinese medical texts can only be fully expressed through TCM's terminological system. For Unschuld, translation entails achieving high fidelity between the target and source languages in meaning and form, avoiding deletions, unnecessary interpretations, and additions. He believes in preserving the original appearance of Chinese medicine as much as possible when translating its literature.

For instance, the "Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine Suwen," originating over two thousand years ago, presents treatises that different readers may interpret variously, sometimes diverging significantly from the author's original intent. Consequently, in his translations, Unschuld strives to preserve the content and structure of the original text to reproduce its ideas, theories, and practices fully. He reinterprets the original text's pictures, views, and methods to the reader rather than the translator. Unschuld places his understanding of the original text and its cultural background in footnotes or appendices to avoid compromising the overall integrity of the translation, thereby maintaining the original appearance of Chinese medicine to the greatest extent possible.

Joseph Needham, born in England in 1900, was a distinguished scientist, historian, and sinologist. As a member of the British Royal Society and an academic at the University of Cambridge, Needham is renowned for his extensive research on Chinese science and technology. His work significantly addressed the complexities of translating Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) terminology and proposed strategies to mitigate these challenges. Critiquing Manfred B. Porker's approach, Needham observed, "He pursued a line rather different from that which we would still prefer to adopt. He has largely gone over directly to Latin" [9]. Contrary to Porker, Needham sought to develop a lexicon grounded in semantic principles that would be more accessible to Western audiences, coining numerous new terms derived from Greek and Latin origins. Although he generally eschewed transliteration, he accepted it for specific untranslatable terms such as Tao, Yin, Yang, and particularly qi, which had previously been translated as "energy." Needham contended that literal translations often needed to convey the intended meaning and could impede understanding. However, he recognized that literal translations were suitable when the semantic meaning was explicit, such as with terms like heart, liver, lung, spleen, and kidney. His approach to standardization significantly influenced subsequent

scholars and remained a focal point of debate among experts and translators into the early 21st century.

Despite the divergent strategies employed by Manfred B. Porker and Joseph Needham for standardizing TCM terminology, both approaches predominantly relied on Latin words or roots from Latin and Greek, likely reflecting their traditional roles in Western science and medicine. However, these methods resulted in new, complex terms that proved challenging for contemporary readers. As familiarity with classical languages waned, fewer individuals could easily read and comprehend the terms generated through these classical-inspired translation systems. Although they failed to establish a fully standardized terminology system, these early endeavors provided essential insights and underscored the necessity for a standardized English translation of TCM terms.

The historical progression of English translations of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) during this period reveals that foreign experts and scholars conducted most of the translation efforts and dissemination. Although relatively few, some Chinese experts and scholars also directly contributed to translating and presenting Chinese medicine internationally. This era marked a transition from focusing predominantly on acupuncture and moxibustion to addressing the history of prescription drugs. The utilization of Latin in translations virtually ceased, and English emerged as the predominant language for translation [13]. At this stage, there were few English translations of TCM terminologies. Foreign scholars notably translated works like the Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine Su Wen into English. Due to these translators' limited understanding of Chinese medical culture and the absence of a comprehensive dictionary, the translation process took much work. The English translations of TCM terms during this period were diverse, employing transliteration, paraphrasing, and borrowing from Western medical terminology. Despite the lack of uniform translation standards, the endeavors of these early translators established a foundation for the eventual standardization of Chinese medicine translation.

Standardized Research Period: (Early 1980s to Present)

In the late 1970s, Western countries witnessed a resurgence of interest in acupuncture and moxibustion, primarily driven by the intrigue surrounding acupuncture anesthesia in China and other nations. This era saw an increased commitment from scholars towards translating and researching traditional Chinese medicine (TCM). Numerous articles addressing the English translation of TCM were published in esteemed Chinese journals, such as the Chinese Journal of Integrated Traditional Chinese and Western Medicine and Chinese Translation. Several pivotal TCM textbooks and monographs focusing on English translations were published, including the Chinese and English Glossary of Commonly Used Chinese Medicine and the Chinese-English Glossary of Commonly Used Chinese Medicine Terms.

The primary audience for these Chinese-to-English translations was non-native Chinese speakers, particularly those whose first language was English. This underscored the critical importance of accurately translating Chinese medical terminologies into English. Enthusiastic researchers of TCM in Europe and the United States also engaged in the translation process, compiling English-language textbooks and translating classical medical texts. Given TCM's profound cultural roots, specific Chinese medical terms were obscure and challenging for foreigners to comprehend. This challenge was compounded by significant translation variations between domestic translators, who might need more clarity, and foreign translators, whose cultural backgrounds differed markedly. This disparity led to multiple translations for the same term, creating confusion.

Recognizing the imperative for standardization, TCM scholars and experts began advocating for a unified approach to translating TCM terms. Relevant organizations in China initiated the development of dictionaries and the standardization of English translations of TCM terms. Since acupuncture had been introduced to Western societies earlier than other aspects of Chinese medicine, initial efforts to standardize the nomenclature of acupuncture points were primarily undertaken by the World Health Organization (WHO).

This review critically examines the historical progression and development of English translations of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) terminology, delineating the roles and contributions of various individuals and organizations throughout different phases of standardization. It synthesizes their translation methodologies, principles, standards, and guiding philosophies while highlighting international

standardization's contemporary status and prospects in TCM translation. By analyzing these dimensions, the study delineates a promising trajectory for establishing global standards for TCM terminology translation.

During this period, both Chinese and international scholars made significant contributions. Notable among these scholars were Xie Zhufang, Ou Ming, and Giovanni Maciocia. Xie Zhufang, a 1946 graduate of Peking University School of Medicine, held various academic and clinical roles, including physician, lecturer, associate professor, and deputy director of the Department of Internal Medicine at the First Affiliated Hospital of Peking Medical College. He dedicated substantial efforts to the study and translation of TCM. As director and professor of the Department of TCM and honorary director of the Institute of Combining Chinese and Western Medicine, Xie consulted for the World Health Organization (WHO) several times. In 1980 he compiled the Chinese-English Dictionary of TCM Vocabulary, primarily utilized at Peking University. He later published the revised Chinese-English Classified Dictionary of TCM in 1994, which featured improved translations and received endorsements from various government bodies. The preface of the revised edition expressed hopes for further refinement of the English terms to achieve a standardized TCM terminology in English [13]. Xie's contributions were notable for his advocacy of modern medical terms in translating TCM terminology, which facilitated enhanced medical communication. He opposed literal translations and employed a flexible methodology integrating direct translation, paraphrasing, and phonetic translation alongside Western medical terms corresponding to TCM concepts.

Ou Ming, born in 1924 in China, was arguably the first Chinese scholar to systematically address the principles and methods of standardizing English translations of TCM terms. As a lifelong professor of TCM at Guangzhou University, Ou and his team compiled two significant dictionaries between 1978 and 1986: the Chinese-English Glossary of Common Terms in Traditional Chinese Medicine and the Chinese-English Dictionary of Traditional Chinese Medicine. He proposed a combination of transliteration, free translation, and semi-transliteration with semi-free translation for TCM terms. His scholarly work, discussed extensively in several papers, laid a robust foundation for future translation practices and standardization, becoming a cornerstone of translation practice in China [12]. However, his principles and methods were still nascent, and the impact of his dictionaries was limited outside of China, constraining their broader influence.

The initial phase in establishing standards for the English translation of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) terminology was spearheaded by the State Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine (SACTM). SACTM orchestrated and executed translation initiatives, culminating in successfully publishing glossaries and standards that provided preliminary guidelines for translators. Despite the emergence of several dictionaries during this period, there needed to be more theoretical discourse on translation methodologies. The early efforts in translating TCM terminology were predominantly concentrated on fundamental concepts such as yin, yang, and the Five Elements. Phonetic translation methods were extensively employed to render specific TCM terms that lacked direct English equivalents. The World Health Organization (WHO) played a crucial role in standardizing English translations for TCM terminology, with significant achievements, including the development of standardized nomenclature for acupuncture points, which established a foundational framework for subsequent standardization endeavors.

The second phase of TCM translation, from the 1990s to the close of the 20th century, was characterized by a synthesis of practical and theoretical advancements in the standardization of translation practices. As Chinese medicine progressed toward standardization and international integration, it became increasingly evident that the fragmented nature of various "schools of thought" in TCM translation was insufficient to address contemporary demands. The persistent "inconsistent terminology and interpretation" issues significantly impeded the advancement of English translations and the effective international communication of TCM concepts. Consequently, establishing a theoretical framework and a standardized model for TCM terminology translation became crucial [15].

In 1992, the Chinese Journal of Integrative Chinese and Western Medicine inaugurated a dedicated column on "Chinese to English Translation," thereby creating a platform for systematic and comprehensive discourse on theoretical research and practical applications in the English translation of Chinese medicine. This journal emerged as a leading authority in the field, shifting from predominantly practical translation efforts to a more integrated approach incorporating theoretical research [8].

Prominent scholars of this era included Nigel Wiseman and Li Zhaoguo. Nigel Wiseman, born in England in April 1954, earned his Ph.D. in Complementary Medicine from the University of Exeter in 1998. His extensive engagement in the English translation of TCM includes his role as a lecturer at Chang Gung University in Taiwan and editor at Peerless Publishing House in the United States (Smith, 2015). Wiseman's significant contributions encompass publications such as *Translation and Interpretation of Typhoid, Commonly Used Characters in Chinese Medicine*, and the widely referenced *A Practical Dictionary of Chinese Medicine*. He has edited or translated over 30 dictionaries of TCM terms and classical texts. One of his notable works, *The English Translation Vocabulary of TCM*, is highly esteemed among Western readers and frequently cited by major American publishers of Chinese medicine, including Paradigm Publications and Blue Poppy Press. Wiseman championed literal translation using colloquial language equivalents and opposed the use of Western medical terminology and Latin, except for medicinal names. He also introduced new terms and phrases in standard English. Since 1993, Wiseman has authored numerous articles and engaged in extensive discussions on translation methodology, extralinguistic factors, and the role of translated language in Chinese medicine, actively participating in debates on terminology with other experts.

Wiseman's dictionary and translation theory represents the inaugural effort toward a comprehensive, systematic, and rigorously standardized terminology system for Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). This pioneering work has received substantial acclaim and has been widely utilized, especially within English-speaking nations. Nonetheless, Wiseman's methodologies for translating TCM terminology have yet to achieve universal endorsement, and his proposed terminology system has yet to attain official recognition as an international standard.

Nigel Wiseman championed a source-oriented methodology that prioritizes cultural translation, with technical translation as a supplementary role (Wu et al., 2021). Recognizing that Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) is deeply rooted in a distinctive philosophical perspective that harmonizes the relationship between heaven and humanity, Wiseman argued that TCM should be translated as an encyclopedic text encompassing medicine, philosophy, and history. This approach is intended to preserve the Eastern philosophical and cultural context. Accordingly, translations must adhere closely to the original meanings of terms to accurately convey the conceptual framework of Chinese medicine, thus enabling Western audiences to grasp and appreciate it in a manner akin to its native understanding. This methodology also facilitates a more objective presentation of Chinese medical concepts. Wiseman's translation principles are delineated as follows:

- Non-specialist terms should be rendered using their non-specialist equivalents.
- Specialized terms should predominantly employ imitative translations.
- When imitation fails to produce an appropriate equivalent, new terms should be devised based on definitions, with translations applied judiciously.

Wiseman advocated for expanding vocabulary in the target language through several methods, including using existing nouns, loanwords (direct phonetic translations of nouns from the source language), imitation, and creating new terms based on original definitions. His translation strategies eschewed paraphrasing in favor of imitation (i.e., direct translation), phonetic translation, phonetic translation with annotations, or direct translation with explanatory notes. Specifically, Wiseman's translation techniques encompassed converting general language terms into existing equivalents in the target language, employing direct translation for specialized terms, and devising equivalents through definition or phonetic translation for terms lacking suitable counterparts [15].

Li Zhaoguo, born in 1961, is an inspiration in Traditional Chinese Medicine translation. He holds an extensive academic background with a B.A. in English Language and Literature, an M.A. in Medical English, a Ph.D. in Traditional Chinese Medicine, and a postdoctoral degree in English Language and Literature Translation. He currently serves as the Deputy Director of the Chinese Medicine Foreign Language Committee of the Chinese Society of Integrative Medicine, a member of the Chinese Medicine Committee of the National Committee for the Validation of Scientific and Technical Terminology, a member of the International Standardization Validation Committee for Chinese Medicine Terminology of the World Federation of Chinese Medicine, and the President of the Chinese Medicine Translation Branch of the World Federation of Chinese Medicine.

Li's research into translating Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) began in the early 1990s, leading to the publication of numerous scholarly monographs, textbooks, and dictionaries on the subject [11]. He has authored over one hundred papers on the English translation of Chinese medicine and has contributed extensively to the field through various other publications. A significant milestone in his career was releasing his seminal work, *Skills of English Translation of TCM*, by People's Medical Publishing House in 1996. This work was a groundbreaking theoretical exposition on TCM translation in China, outlining the translation principles and methodologies applicable to TCM terminologies.

Li has also produced several Chinese-English dictionaries of TCM terms. The earliest of these was published by World Publishing Corporation in 1997. In this work, he articulated five foundational principles for the English translation of TCM terms: naturalness, conciseness, national character, back-translatability, and prescriptiveness. For example, terms that encapsulate distinct Chinese cultural characteristics and abstract meanings without direct English equivalents should, according to his guidelines, maintain the holistic and dialectical nature of TCM through phonetic translation methods.

Li's contributions have significantly impacted the field of TCM translation in China and played a crucial role in establishing national and international TCM terminology standards. The terminology system delineated in his dictionaries has attracted substantial international attention and informed the ongoing development of global standards.

In 1991, Li Zhaoguo delineated three foundational principles pertinent to translating Chinese medicine in his seminal work, *English Translation Skills for Chinese Medicine*. These principles encompass (1) an emphasis on the pragmatic aspects of therapeutic interventions, (2) the identification of commonalities with Western medical paradigms while preserving essential distinctions, and (3) the consideration of the distinctive attributes of Chinese medicine. Li revisited these principles in his 2004 article, "Re-discussing the Principles of Chinese Medicine English Translation," where he reflected on their application and argued that these principles remain the subject of ongoing theoretical and practical discourse due to the intrinsic complexities involved in translating Chinese medicine.

Li posited that although the translation of Chinese medicine is fundamentally anchored in scientific and technological realms, it frequently neglects the philosophical dimensions intrinsic to the field. He advocated for a translation approach in TCM terminology that incorporates naturalness, simplicity, cultural specificity, back-translation, and prescriptiveness [6]. His translation methodology, described as "goal-oriented," amalgamates scientific and technical translation techniques with cultural translation as a complementary facet.

To summarize the second discourse phase, the principal emphasis was on addressing the fundamental issues associated with the English translation and standardization of Chinese medical terminology. The *Chinese Journal of Integrated Chinese and Western Medicine* featured a dedicated section on this topic, publishing a series of articles titled "Discussion on the English Translation of the Basic Theories and Terms of TCM." This period also witnessed significant advancements in theoretical research on translating Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). Noteworthy contributions included publishing numerous articles and monographs, such as *Introduction to Translation in Chinese Medicine* and *Techniques of English Translation in Chinese Medicine*. These works facilitated a growing recognition of the need for standardized English translations of TCM terms.

Scholars increasingly agreed on addressing inconsistencies in English translations of TCM terms, underscoring the necessity for active engagement by translators and oversight by relevant institutions. The urgency of standardizing English translations of TCM terms became increasingly apparent. Concerning translation methodologies and principles, the predominant scholarly stance supported the principle of conventional translation for specific terms while retaining established translations. They opposed methods such as Latinization, translation of linguistic elements, the creation of new terms, and excessive dependence on phonetic translations.

Additionally, the previously fragmented TCM translation community began to coalesce, establishing relevant academic organizations. In 1991, the Chinese Society of Integrative Medicine established the Committee of Foreign Languages in Traditional Chinese Medicine. Subsequently, in 1996, the Chinese Society of Traditional

Chinese Medicine founded the Chinese Medicine Translation Society, which was crucial in ensuring the standardization of English translations of Chinese medical terms.

The third phase signifies a notable advancement in formulating English translation standards for Chinese medicine from the early 21st century. Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) has achieved widespread and profound global acceptance and practice. This advancement has been facilitated by the initiatives of various Chinese governmental bodies, including the National Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine, the Ministry of Science and Technology of the People's Republic of China, and the World Federation of Chinese Medicine Societies. Despite these national efforts, the World Health Organization (WHO) oversees international involvement in developing these standards.

The involvement of these governmental entities has significantly accelerated the standardization of English translations for TCM terminologies, culminating in the publication of numerous standards. The Chinese government's proactive engagement in international forums is driven by its substantial political influence, flourishing economy, and rich cultural heritage.

The historical trajectory of TCM terminology standardization reflects a progression towards increasingly uniform, internationally recognized, and transparent standards subject to periodic revision. This evolution demonstrates a shift from earlier methodologies, which may have yet to fully address contemporary demands, to more culturally and professionally informed approaches. The process has transitioned from fragmented research to systematic inquiries, isolated endeavors, and collaborative efforts. The successful establishment of these standards is closely associated with the growing global acceptance of TCM and the expansion of China's international stature. Earlier engagement and more cooperative efforts by official organizations could have mitigated some debates and redundant activities, conserving resources, time, and financial investments.

The current attainment of international standards for TCM terminologies results from substantial contributions from numerous scholars and experts. Despite ongoing challenges and the persistence of multiple measures for TCM terminologies, the increasing global utilization of TCM, its deeper integration with Western medical systems, and enhanced participation by international organizations are expected to foster the development of a more comprehensive and widely endorsed standard.

Current Status Of International Standardization On Tcm English Translation

As previously delineated, two principal international standards govern the English translation of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) terminology. The first standard, titled WHO International Standards for Traditional Medical Terms in the Western Pacific Region, was promulgated by the WHO Western Pacific Office on October 16, 2007. This standard encompasses 3,686 terms about general theory, fundamental theory, diagnostic practices, a spectrum of diseases, therapeutic methods, and classical texts of traditional medicine. The second standard, the Chinese and English Standard for Basic Terminology of Traditional Chinese Medicine, was issued by the World Federation of Chinese Medicine Societies (WFCMS) in the same year. This standard incorporates 6,526 entries, covering TCM theory, diagnostic criteria, treatment modalities, prescriptions, acupuncture, moxibustion, clinical departments, and other pertinent fields. Collectively, these standards provide a foundational framework for the English translation of TCM terminology.

The coordination and unification of technical standards governing content within the Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) industry are of paramount importance. Relevant organizations actively foster the development of technical standards for TCM terminology translation. The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) plays a pivotal role in this process through its extensive network of over 300 technical committees. Notably, Technical Committee 249 (TC249) and Technical Committee 215 (TC215) are instrumental in developing TCM standards. As of April 2021, TC249 has promulgated 67 international standards related to TCM and is overseeing 29 ongoing projects, including ten that pertain to TCM diagnostics and the standards for instruments used to obtain tongue and pulse data (International Organization for Standardization, 2021). TC215, established by ISO in 1998, is dedicated to health informatics and has issued 15 standards concerning traditional medicine. These standards primarily address the classification structures of conventional medicine, the semantic frameworks of TCM language systems, TCM literature metadata, and

various data set types [8].

The international standardization of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) has experienced continuous enhancement, encompassing fundamental standards, technical specifications, and various other dimensions. A preliminary standardization framework has emerged in conjunction with TCM's global integration. Numerous international standardization organizations are actively advancing the development of TCM terminology standards. In this milieu, it is crucial to capitalize on opportunities further to establish a robust international standard system for TCM terminology, thereby precisely articulating TCM's pivotal role in disease prevention.

Prospect Of International Standardization On Tcm English Translation

The progression of international standardization is intricately connected to the trajectory of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) within its global industrialization and dissemination. The profound distinctions between TCM and Western medicine, encompassing theoretical frameworks and terminological subtleties, present significant challenges to the global expansion of TCM. Despite notable advancements, the international standardization of TCM must still be completed. Therefore, there is an urgent need for continued development in the standardization process to ensure comprehensive coverage and to support the effective global integration of TCM.

Early English Translations of Chinese Medicine (17th century - late 1970s)

The establishment of diverse standards is fundamentally anchored in foundational research efforts within the domain of standardization. This research, which forms the bedrock for developing international standards, necessitates further investigation and refinement. The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) has emerged as a central entity in the contemporary global economic milieu, acting as a conduit for advancing globalization and facilitating the dissemination of innovation. The development and promulgation of international standards for Chinese medicine adhere to a rigorous statutory procedure comprising seven stages: planning, proposal, submission, public review, drafting, validation, and approval. The approval stage requires a formal vote by national delegations. Standards formulated and issued by ISO are endorsed by the World Trade Organization (WTO), thereby bestowing significant authority and global applicability upon these standards.

Construction of the International Standard System of TCM English Translation Still Needs Long-term Efforts

Establishing a standardization system for Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) terminology encompasses three principal dimensions: foundational, methodological, and product standards. Basic general standards provide the essential framework for the other two standards; product standards support the industrialization process, while methodological standards act as the intermediary bridging foundational and product standards. The international standardization of TCM terminology predominantly focuses on developing terminology standards. Recent national reports reflect a paradigm shift in primary standards from emphasizing individual terms to a more integrative approach encompassing a comprehensive range of terms, information, and codes (International Organization for Standardization, 2021).

Cooperation in the International Standardization of TCM Terminology English Translation Needs Further Improvement.

International standardization is a collaborative enterprise involving multiple nations and organizations. Effective coordination of standardization activities across various countries and regions necessitates extensive efforts to study, develop, and promote adopting international standards. Given the diverse cultural and medical systems and varying levels of development among participating countries, it is imperative to leverage the initiatives of all involved stakeholders. Respecting cultural differences, conducting multicenter demonstrations, and fostering international cooperation are essential for progress. Aligning interests, reducing disparities, and achieving broad consensus is critical for advancing and implementing international Chinese Medicine (TCM) standards. Despite the participation of numerous nations in developing global standards, there remains a need to strengthen international standardization efforts further [14].

CONCLUSION

The advancement of international standardization is intricately linked to the global dissemination and application of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and its trajectory toward international industrialization. The effective establishment of these standards is closely correlated with the growing global acceptance of TCM and the expanding international influence of China. The current progress in the international standardization of TCM terminology results from concerted efforts by numerous scholars and experts. Despite the persistence of multiple standards for TCM terminology and ongoing challenges, there is optimism that a more comprehensive and widely recognized standard will ultimately be developed. The increasing global utilization of TCM supports this anticipated progress, its deeper integration with Western medical systems, and the enhanced engagement of international organizations.

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