

A Study on Application of Construal Theory in English Translation of Chinese Medical book: take English Translation of Jin Gui Yao Liao as an Example

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ABSTRACT

The translation of Chinese medical books is characterized by language, cultural connotation and cognitive domain background, which makes the translators encounter different levels of difficulty in the process of translation and form different translations accordingly. This paper takes the construal theory in cognitive linguistics as a guide, analyzes the important role of four kinds of means of construal in the process of translating Chinese medical books, and analyzes the different English translations of JGL under the construal theory, analyzes that different translations reflect different cognitive mechanisms of the translators, and comes to the conclusion that the translations should maximally reflect the cognitive points of reference of the authors at that time, so as to maximize the translations. It is also concluded that the translation should maximally reflect the author's cognitive reference point so as to maximize the closeness of the translation to the original text, aiming to provide theoretical guidance and reference for the English translation of Chinese medical books.

KEYWORDS

Chinese medical books; Jin Gui Yao Liao; Cognitive theory; Cognitive translation; Translation theory

1. INTRODUCTION

Jin Gui Yao Liao (The Essentials of the Golden Chamber), formerly known as Jin Gui Yao Liao Fang Lun (Treatise on the Essentials of the Golden Chamber), is one of the Treatises on Typhoid and Cold Diseases written by Zhang Zhongjing, a famous medical practitioner of the Eastern Han Dynasty. The "Golden Chamber" is the place where the ancient emperors and kings stored their sacred instructions and records, which means that the contents of this book are precious. The book is divided into three volumes: upper, middle and lower, totaling 25 articles, containing more than 60 kinds of diseases and 262 prescriptions. The diseases mentioned in the book are mainly internal diseases, including surgical and gynecological diseases, as well as first aid for death and stroke, and dietary taboos. It was regarded as "the ancestor of prescription books" by later generations. The Golden Chamber Essentials, written by Zhang Zhongjing at the end of the Han Dynasty, is a classic work of traditional Chinese medicine that combines theory and practice, and has been one of the most important books for the study and research of traditional Chinese medicine for many generations. It contains a total of 25 articles in three volumes, including 262 prescriptions, which are of high practical value and significance, and have had a profound impact on the development of clinical medicine in later generations. Accompanied by the Chinese medicine towards the international stage, the English translation of "The Essentials of the Golden Chamber" has become an important research topic for the exchange and dissemination of Chinese medicine culture to the outside world.

The contents of The Essential Principles of the Golden Chamber are concise, abstract, profound and obscure, and the translation is limited by the translator's cultural background, professional

background and translation level, as well as by the selection of the text, the purpose of translation and the translation strategy, which produces different translation effects. This paper mainly focuses on the two English translations of *The Essentials of the Golden Chamber*, namely Luo Xiwen's translation and Li Zhaoguo's translation, and explores the differences between the translations of *The Essentials of the Golden Chamber* in terms of cognitive understanding, as well as the ways of knowledge that the translators are involved in translating the text.

2. OVERVIEW OF CONSTRUAL THEORY

Cognitive linguistics rejects the modular view of language, arguing that there is no clear and unambiguous boundary between semantics and pragmatics, and that semantics is tantamount to conceptualization and is closely related to the mental experiences and cognitive processing activities of language users (Langacker 2013). Cognitive grammar refers to the ability to imagine and describe the same situation in different ways as construal. "Construal is used both to refer to the abstract representations that people develop in the course of perceiving and experiencing external events, and to describe the cognitive ability to choose different ways of looking at the context and interpreting its content for the purpose of expression and its constituent elements. It is the way a speaker mentally forms and constructs the semantic content of an expression (Wen Xu 2007). Langacker (2013) points out that the meaning of a linguistic expression depends not only on the conceptual content, but also on the particular way in which that content is understood.

Thus, for the same cognitive object and conceptual content, if the way of understanding is different, the form and semantic meaning of linguistic expressions are also different. The same is true of translation. Translation varies according to the translator's mode of understanding. This paper adopts Langacker's (2008, 2013) classification, which divides construal into four dimensions: specificity, prominence and perspectives, background and analyzes the impacts of different construal styles on different translations of *Jin Gui Yao Liao* from these four dimensions. The influence of different ways of understanding on different translations of the *Golden Chamber*.

3. COMPOSITION OF CONSTRUAL THEORY

Specificity, prominence, perspectives, and background constitute the four main ways of construal in cognitive translation, and each element is interconnected with and influences each other, which makes the study of cognitive translation more detailed. Construal is like a bridge that connects the seemingly abstract concept of cognition with concrete translation practice, changing people's previous abstract understanding of the concept of cognition. In the process of translation, translators should take "construal" with them on the road, not only in interpreting the original text, but also in converting the original text into translation, to show the readers such awareness.

4. CONSTRUAL AND TRANSLATION STUDIES

Construal has strong explanatory power for the study of translation process. According to Wang Yin (2013:54), construal not only can be used to analyze expressions at the linguistic level and propose a feasible analytical solution for explaining human subjectivity, but also applies to the study of the cognitive process of translation. Tan Yesheng (2016:16-17) points out that cognitive linguistics holds a constructivist view of meaning, which holds that meaning is not an antecedent object to be decoded, and the translation process is not a process of transplanting antecedent meanings, but a process of constructing and reconstructing meanings between two linguistic cultures based on the context of translation activities. The cognitive linguistics theory of construal brings a new way of thinking to recognize translation, and it is believed that there exists a relationship between construal and the cognitive essence of translation conversion in the following two aspects: construal plays an

indispensable role in the construction of meaning, which is the reason for exploring translation conversion from the perspective of construal; the cognitive essence of translation conversion lies in the reconstruction and selection of construal. Wen Xu and Xiao Kaiyong (2019:130) also believe that translation is a process of meaning construction or conceptualization, and meaning construction or conceptualization is the result of literacy, a kind of construalization, so translation is also a kind of construalization in this sense. Different translators have different cognitive styles of the same linguistic expression under the influence of cognitive factors such as specificity, prominence, perspectives, and background (Zhang Yan and Guo Yin 2021: 97). To summarize, construal and translation are inseparable. Translation is a cognitive process of language transformation and meaning construction and reconstruction, and the analytical perspective of cognitive construal helps to describe this process. Specifically, construal can provide a unified explanation for the strategies and methods of translation, such as augmentation, subtraction and conversion, which can help to reveal the motives and cognitive laws behind the translation process.

5. STUDY ON THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE GOLDEN CHAMBER FROM FOUR CONSTRUAL DIMENSIONS BASED ON THE TWO TRANSLATION VERSION

5.1. Specificity: Reflecting Cognitive Effort And Cognitive Increment

Specificity refers to perceiving or describing an entity with different degrees of precision, which is one of the principles of human cognitive processing and ways of recognizing and understanding things. In the process of translation, when the translator wants to refine the described content, he/she will adopt translation techniques such as adding words and annotations to make the information more clear and specific in the translation; on the contrary, if the translator wants to simplify the complex and lengthy content, he/she may adopt the method of omission, so that the information expressed in the translation will tend to be abbreviated and generalized. Chinese medical books contain many obscure words or concepts, which often need to be adjusted appropriately in order for readers to better understand the content of the original text or the culture of Chinese medicine. For example, "阴阳脉" is a factor that hinders readers' understanding. From the translation, some authors directly translate it as "pulse tense both in Yin and Yang", which is much abbreviated without any explanation. "Pulse of both yin and yang (chi pulse and cun pulse)", with the yin corresponding to the ulnar pulse and the yang corresponding to the inches pulse deliberately labeled inside the parentheses, so that the reader has a more accurate understanding of the yin and yang mentioned here. The following section will focus on the translations of Luo Xiwen and Li Zhaoguo for a detailed perspective.

Example one:

心中痞，诸逆，心悬痛，桂枝生姜枳实汤主之。

Luo: The disease marked by stagnation in the heart, various pathogenic factors in reversal surge upwards to the heart and suspending pain can be treated by Guijiang Zhishi Decoction.

Li: symptom and signs of vital-energy stagnation, adverse ascending feeling and suspended pain of the heart can be eliminated by prescribing decoction of ramulus cinnamomi, rihizoma zingiberis recens and fructus aurantii immaturus.

This sentence is from "Jin Gui Yao Liao - Thoracic Paralysis, Heartache and Shortness of Qi Disease". The term "心悬痛" refers to the upward tugging pain in the region of the heart's fossa, and is a combination of heart pain and a sensation of suspension. Prof. Ruan Jiyuan translated it as "heart pain", which is a simplification of the term "心悬痛", and briefly summarizes it as pain. In Chinese medicine, different parts of the body are specifically categorized as different degrees of pain, and according to the different parts of the body, the degree of pain will be treated with different

prescriptions. Obviously, the term 'heart pain' is too general and cannot be used to express the symptoms of patients, so it cannot realize the functional equivalence with the original text. The Luo and Li translators further elaborated it to 'suspended heart pain'. The word 'suspended' has the meaning of "to hang sth from sth else", which corresponds to the sense of suspension, and it can realize the functional equivalence in comprehension, which can make the readers of the translated text understand the meaning of the original text to the greatest extent.

Example two:

胸痹心中痞，留气结在胸，胸满，胁下逆抢心，枳实薤白桂枝汤主之，人参汤亦主之。

Luo: In chest impediment disease, there are symptoms and signs of lump in the heart, accumulation of qi in the chest, chest fullness, counterflow of qi below the rib-side surging upwards to the heart.

Li: chest obstruction syndrome maybe accompanied by either vital energy stagnation in the epigastrium or by stagnation of the vital energy in the chest with a sensation of fullness in the chest and gas ascending from the ribs rushing toward the heart.

This sentence is from "The Golden Chamber - Chest Paralysis, Heartache and Shortness of Qi Disease, Pulse Evidence and Treatment IX". "痞" in Chinese medicine refers to a self-perceived symptom of a blockage of qi, sometimes manifesting as a feeling of fullness and discomfort. "心中痞" refers to the feeling of being blocked in the heart. Prof. Han Chou-ping translated it as "chest discomfort and tightness", obviously he summarized chest discomfort as discomfort and tightness and could not reflect the sense of fullness and obstruction in the original meaning of the word '痞', and could not realize the same meaning as that of 'plumpness' in the original text. Obstructive feeling, cannot realize the functional equivalence with the original text. Professors Luo Xiwen and Li Zhaoguo elaborated it as 'lump in the heart' 'vital energy stagnation in the epigastrium'. Lump" means "a compact mass of a substance, especially one without a definite or regular shape", which is translated as "a lump of indefinite shape". The word "lump" means "a compact mass of a substance, especially one without a definite or regular shape", which in Chinese means an unshaped lump, so the translation "lump in the heart" better reflects the feeling of lumpiness in the heart. The word 'stagnation' also reflects the meaning of stagnation and obstruction, but epigastium means upper abdomen, which is inconsistent with the original meaning. It should be translated as 'lump in the heart'.

5.2. Background And Scope: Maximizing Approximation To The Original Texts

The background is the experiential knowledge and the configuration of conceptual domains activated by the linguistic expressions used in the description of an object. domains constrains one's understanding of the precise meaning of an expression or a text as it relates to one's encyclopedic knowledge. It can be understood in a broader sense as the contextual scope of translation activities, and in a narrower sense as the conceptual domains that activate the cognitive 'knowledge and understanding' activities of the translator in the translation process. When it comes to the terminological scope of Chinese medicine, it means that when understanding the terminological scope of the original text, it is necessary to activate one or more scopes at the same time, so as to provide the background or experience related to this terminological scope to help the readers of the translated text to understand the concepts and meanings of the terms in the original text. The difference in jurisdiction and context is reflected in the English translations of TCM. The term "heart" is widely used as an important term in both TCM and Western medicine. The concepts of the five viscera and six bowels in Chinese medicine are in fact very different from those of the organs in the West. The understanding and translation of "心" in Chinese and Western medicine necessarily involves different conceptual domains. "The terms (heart, liver, spleen, lungs, kidneys) in Chinese medicine are not only anatomical concepts, but more of a functional concept." (Xu, Li-Qin, Wang, Juan, 2008:118) The concept of 心't in TCM denotes that the heart can also have the functions of "spirit and mind". In Western medicine, "心" is equivalent to the heart, which is an organ of the human body. Since the

domains are different, the words used in understanding and translating should be determined according to the different conceptual domains to be stimulated. This is also reflected in the study of the English translation of Jin Gui Yao Liao.

Example one:

胸痹心中痞，留气结在胸，胸满，胁下逆抢心，枳实薤白桂枝汤主之，人参汤亦主之。

Li: In chest impediment disease, there are symptoms and signs of lump in the heart, accumulation of qi in the chest, chest fullness, counterflow of qi below the rib-side surging upwards to the heart.

Luo: chest obstruction syndrome maybe accompanied by either vital energy stagnation in the epigastrium or by stagnation of the vital energy in the chest with a sensation of fullness in the chest and gas ascending from the ribs rushing toward the heart.

The sentence is from "The Essentials of the Golden Chamber - Thoracic Paralysis, Heartache, Shortness of Qi". Qi in Chinese medicine is a broader concept that refers to essence, whether it is Wei Qi, Zong Qi, Yuan Qi, etc. It is a function that is complementary to the yin and liquid substances in the body and is mutually beneficial to each other. It refers to the function of the body's substances and the yin and liquid phases, which complement each other. For example, the relationship between qi and blood is that "qi is the commander of blood, and blood is the mother of qi". Qi promotes the circulation of blood, and blood is the material source of Qi. Qi and blood have different roles and are interdependent. Qi first comes from our breathing, from the oxygen we inhale into our bodies. Therefore, it cannot be translated as gas or air; with the great contribution of Chinese medicine to international medicine in recent years, the concept of qi is gradually gaining acceptance, and because of the special cognitive domains it involves, more and more translators are translating it as 'QI'. Li Zhaoguo's translation is more appropriate than Luo Wenxi's version.

Example two:

风气虽能生万物，亦能害万物，如水能浮舟，亦能覆舟。

Luo: Although natural climate can support the growth of all things, it also can damage all things. It is just like water, which can float a boat, but also can capsize it.

Li: the climate can promote and give birth to all creatures under heaven, but may also injure and hurt these creatures-similar to the way water keeps a boat afloat, but can also overturn it.

The sentence is from "Jin Gui Yao Liao - Organ and Meridian Sequential Disease Pulse No. 1".the word '生' can inspire several conceptual domains in Chinese. The original meaning of 生 is the breaking of the ground and sprouting of grass and trees. It is later derived as from nothing to something, emergence. From nothing to something, emergence is derived as a mother giving birth to a child, giving birth to a child. It can correspond to both 'giving birth to' and 'grow' in English. The word 'give birth to all things' can mean both the giving of life to all things, which corresponds to the Taoist idea of 'one is born of two, two is born of three, and three is born of all things', and the source of growth that sustains all things. Luo Xiwen's version does not deal with the conceptual domain of giving life to all things, which is contrary to traditional Chinese thought. In contrast, Li Zhaoguo's version 'promote' and 'give birth to' correspond to the two conceptual domains of life in the original context. Therefore, it is more appropriate to translate 'give birth to all creatures' as 'promote and give birth to all creatures'.

5.3. Perspective: Towards An Optimal Correlation Between The Original And The Translated Text

After determining the description scope and background of a conceptual expression, it is necessary to think about the aspect from which to observe the conceptual expression, that is, the choice of perspective. The choice of perspective is actually the choice of cognitive reference point, people

choose a specific cognitive reference point, and use this reference point as a reference to recognize other things. In this way, people's cognitive pathways will be different, and the resulting linguistic expressions will inevitably be different, and the cognitive results of the same thing will be different. When describing an identical situation or thing, different people from different perspectives will often produce different results. The phenomenon of perspective selection and conversion in the specific translation process is very common and often manifests itself in the choice of translation techniques, such as lexical conversion, personification conversion, and active-passive conversion. The difference in the choice of perspective is extremely obvious in the difference between the two translations of the *Jin Gui Yao Liao*. Perspective in the translated text is the relationship between the observer and the thing, and the choice of person of the subject in the translated text can reflect the perspective tendency. The choice of perspective in *Jingui Yaojiao* is very special, as the majority of the text is a dialog between the patient and the doctor, as a way to record and express the medical information to be conveyed. In this way, almost all the English translations are narrated in the third-person format of one question and one answer, and the overall perspective in the text is firmly anchored. While the translations are faithful to the original text and present the objectivity of the text's message in line with the nature of a medical monograph, the divergence of perspectives appears in the doctors' answers. This paper focuses on the translations of two professors, Luo Wenxi and Li Zhaoguo, and explores the impact of their choice of perspective on their translations.

Example one:

师曰：夫治未病者，见肝之病，知肝传脾，当先实脾。

Lu: For example, when you have seen the disease in the liver, you should realize that it will transmit from the liver to the spleen and therefore you should take measures in advance to strengthen the spleen.

Li: when the liver is affected, a prescription is chosen to replenish the spleen, as the doctor knows the liver disease will be transmitted into the spleen.

The sentence is from "*Jin Gui Yao Liao - Organ and Meridian Successive Disease Pulse No. 1*". By comparing the translations of the two translators, it is not difficult to find that the two translators differ in their choice of person. Luo's version uses the second person 'you', standing in the doctor's point of view to elaborate a medical phenomenon, giving the reader a sense of being in the realm, as if he or she is having a conversation with the doctor. Such a perspective also puts the reader as a participant in the action rather than just an observer, which further distances the reader and enhances the reader's experience. The choice of "doctor" in Li's version is more objective and matches the character of the original medical book. Luo version's perspective can integrate the subjective and objective observations described in the original text, which is closer to the cognitive reference point of the original text, and at the same time realizes the optimal correlation between the original text and the translated text. This optimal correlation is the result of the translator's cognitive understanding of the content of the original text, reasoning from the explicit or implicit meaning of the original text, and then verifying it according to the contextual context, to finally determine the most effective correlation with the original text.

Example two:

酸入肝，焦苦入心，甘入脾。

Luo: To treat liver disease, medicinals sour in property should be used to tonify the liver, medicinals charred and bitter in property should be used to assist to nification of the heart and medicinals sweet in property should be used to regulate the spleen.

Li: ingredients with a sour taste function on the liver, scorched and bitter drugs function on the heart and sweet ingredients function on the spleen.

The sentence is from "Jin Gui Yao Liao - Organ and Meridian Vessels and Pulse of Sequential Diseases No. 1". The two editions differ in their choice of translation perspectives, as well as in the emphasis they highlight. From the word 'should be' in Luo's version, it can be seen that the translation is from a doctor's point of view in describing a Chinese medical prescription, which can bring the reader closer to the translation. However, the word 'should' carries a certain subjective emotional color and shows a certain degree of uncertainty, which is not in line with the objectivity of medical books. The word 'function' in Li Zhaoguo's version, on the other hand, is more objective compared to 'should'. The word 'function' indicates the role of a certain drug in medicine, which goes beyond the framework of the doctor's perspective to describe an objective fact, conveying an implicit message that the prescription is applicable to most TCM symptoms, giving the reader a sense of truthfulness and certainty, which is more in line with the original text's cognitive reference point. This choice of perspective is also reflected in other translations by both translators. For '夫人禀五常，因风气而生长。' Two professors, Luo Xiwen and Li Zhaoguo, respectively translated it as 'People should follow the law of five elements because life is integrated with natural climate.' 'Man lives in a world with five evolutive phases and grows up in a suitable climate.' 'People should 'live' and 'people should' respectively show that Luo still stands in the doctor's point of view to describe an objective fact while Li still uses God's point of view to interpret the original text from an objective angle. The specific choice of perspective should be based on the original text's stylistic characteristics and the original author's cognitive reference point to realize the best correlation between the original text and the translated text.

5.4. Prominence: Maximizing The Proximity To The Cognitive Reference Point Of The Original Text

After determining the scope and perspective of the description of things, we should consider from which aspect of things focus on describing the characteristics of things. The reason for the formation of prominence is that after the formation of scope and perspective, the scene and cognitive reference points are determined to be different, resulting in different points of emphasis, the so-called point of emphasis is the part that is highlighted. When people conceptualize a certain relationship, the involved components will be highlighted to different degrees: the most prominent component is called the "trajector", the main focus of the relationship that is highlighted; while another component that is highlighted is called the "landmarker", the secondary focus (Langacker 2013: 70). In concrete linguistic expressions, the choice of trajector and landmarker often depends on the way the subject conceptualizes the thing, rather than on the objective features of the thing. Speakers have subjective initiative in the trajector-landmarker combination, and they can cognitively process the object through imagination, conceptualizing things that are not easily highlighted as the main focus in the objective as trajector in the relationship, and conceptualizing things that are easy to be highlighted as the main focus as landmarker. Chinese medical books have both the content of basic theories of Chinese medicine and the nature of clinical disciplines. The text has both prescriptions and symptoms, and the prescriptions and symptoms are of equal clinical significance. When the translator focuses on a certain aspect in the process of understanding, it will result in prominence.

Example one:

师曰：吸而微数，其病在中焦，实也，当下之即愈。

Luo: Faint and rapid breath indicates that the disease is in the middle energizer, it is an excess syndrome and can be cured by purgation.

Li: If the patient's inhalation is a bit rapid, it can be diagnosed as excessive pathogenic factors in the middle portion of the body cavity.

The sentence is from 'Jin Gui Yao Liao - Organ and Meridian Sequential Disease Pulse No. 1. In this sentence both translators highlight the symptoms and cause of the condition, although the involved

components are highlighted to different degrees. The Rohypnol version highlights the symptoms more and the cause behind them as evoked by the microcounting of breath. The symptom becomes the trajector as the first focus, and the cause serves as the landmarker. In contrast, Li Zhaoguo's version is the opposite. This example verifies the effect of the difference in highlighting components on the translator.

Example two:

上气，喘而躁者，属肺胀，欲作风水，发汗则愈。

Li: The disease, characterized by rapid breath with counterflow of qi, panting and vexation, is lung distension, consequently developing into wind-water disease. It can be cured by diaphoresis.

Luo: The patient suffers from inspiratory dyspnea, wheezing and restlessness. This is a case of lung-distention, which will lead to edema due to wind evil. Diaphoresis can be adopted to disperse the syndrome.

The sentence is from "The Essentials of the Golden Chamber - Lung Atrophy and Painful Cough with Upper Qi Disease Pulse Evidence and Treatment No. 7" 上气' refers to exhaling more and inhaling less, with rapid breath, and is a symptom of the Lung meridian being subjected to evil, with unfavorable airways. It refers to the upper qi (heart, lungs) qi. The heart and lungs are in the upper part of the body, hence the name. The two translators formed different translations due to the differences in the components highlighted by each of the translations. Li Zhaoguo's version accurately conveys the meaning of '上气' by highlighting both the symptom 'rapid breath' and its cause 'counterflow of qi', indicating that '上气' is caused by the difficulty in breathing due to the upward reversal of qi in the heart and lungs. In contrast, the Rohypnol version highlights the symptoms of 上气 and the difficulty of breathing in without its literal meaning. Different translators emphasize different contents to convey different messages to the readers, and the translation of Li Zhaoguo's version is more comprehensive in comparison.

6. CONCLUSION

Translation is meaning construction or conceptualization. Meaning construction or conceptualization is the result of construal. Therefore to some extent translation is also a process of construal [11]. Translators' different ways of knowledge and understanding cause different results of translation. The language of Chinese medicine is a blend of medicine and philosophy, humanities and natural sciences are intertwined, and some of the language is esoteric, obscure and difficult to understand, so how the translator processes the translation needs to study the cognitive process behind it. This is an important development in the study of English translation of Chinese medical books. Different translation strategies of translators in turn reflect different principles of translation. Based on their different perceptions of Chinese medical books, Luo Xiwen and Li Zhaoguo activate different jurisdictions of their respective perceptions, highlighting the similarities and differences in emphasis from different perspectives. Influenced by the four dimensions, Luo's text is more biased towards conveying medical information, ignoring the correspondence between the form of the translation and the original text, and is more in line with the English expression habits; whereas Li's text highlights more the linguistic features of the source language, ignoring the syntactic structure of the English language, and accurately conveys the concepts, terminology, and other information covered by the TCM canon, while reconstructing the linguistic structure of the source language and preserving the culture of the source text to the greatest extent possible. The translator's literacy factor contributes to the differences in the translations, and the translator's knowledge determines his/her literacy ability, which affects the quality of the translations. Therefore, the richer the translator's knowledge of Chinese medicine is, the more accurate and thorough his understanding of the original text will be. Only then can the translator maximize the medical knowledge and cultural content contained in TCM classics to the

target language readers and promote the dissemination and exchange of TCM culture to foreign countries. This study only analyzes and compares through the literature method, and the conclusions are subjective to a certain extent. A more scientific research method should be used to explore in order to come up with more comprehensive and objective conclusions.

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