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Case Study

Does Culture Translate? A Case Study on Artificial Intelligence-Generated Text Concerning Japanese-Style Employment

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Abstract

Translation matters to international business when it has a discernible impact on firm performance or critical business processes. Current developments include machine translation, which is evolving in tandem with generative artificial intelligence (AI). On one hand, useful translation apps have become available to help the public communicate internationally. On the other hand, recent research concludes that even machine translation's best output still requires post-editing by a human. This argument implies that a machine-translated, grammatically accurate text may not always make sense to a human audience, possibly because of a semantic-pragmatic issue beyond the lexical level. This paper regards it as the issue of translation oddity, which has direct relevance to cross-cultural management. To unpack the issue, this paper examines English translations of AI-generated Japanese texts through an exploratory case-study analysis. The source texts are generated by the Japanese version of Google AI (as opposed to the English/original version) and machine-translated by Google Translate. This paper focuses on the interpretation of translated text, not on the linguistic process of translation. The case findings suggest, based on the AI-generated texts, that the Japanese version of Google AI is relatively collectivistic in comparison to Google AI evolving with English websites. This case-specific finding implies a theoretical proposition that machine learning promotes generative AI to "embody" intangible culture, defined as a system of thought. Akin to humans, AI systems can or will be individualistic or collectivistic, depending on the source-website language. This theoretical proposition points towards the future research area of cross-cultural analysis between generative AI systems. Additionally, future studies can conceptualize the issue of translation oddity, which concerns semantic-pragmatic incongruity beyond the lexical level, for the benefit of international business.

Categories: Computational Intelligence and Information Management, Organisational Behavior, Regional studies

Keywords: artificial intelligence, culture, individualism, collectivism, japanese employment, job description, machine translation, translatability, generative ai, cross-cultural management

Introduction

Translation is a vital part of the daily routine for today's businesses that go beyond language borders. It matters to international business (IB) when it has a discernible impact on firm performance or critical business processes. The source-language text may be a professional's communication regarding a business plan. It may be an operating or institutional manual at the organization level. It may be a set of or part of high-profile principles to govern a whole sector or manage a large amount of monetary assets at the industry level. Various types of translations are created daily for IB. Some of them can have a direct/indirect impact on firm performance, which is often seen as the centerpiece of IB (Cavusgil et al., 2020).

Recent developments include machine translation, which is rapidly evolving in concert with the development of artificial intelligence (AI). On one hand, many useful translation apps, such as Google Translate, have become available to the public at no cost. Machine translation has become part of many users' everyday lives beyond the translation sector. On the other hand, scholars and practitioners commonly conclude that even its best output typically still requires post-editing by a human (Kocmi et al., 2023). This argument seems to relate to the question of whether "machine translators" will replace human translators in the future. No clear answer is available because of the uncertainty of when or even whether AI will reach human intelligence. With the current level of technology, machine translation can be understood as a sophisticated tool powered by machine learning.

The preceding argument intersects with long-standing issue of translation: Translations can appear contextually incongruent at times. More precisely, a translation does not always make sense to a target audience, even if it contains no grammatical errors. This paper refers to it as the issue of translation oddity. Rather surprisingly, there appears to be no established academic term for it. It is often expressed with non-academic yet helpful words, such as "cultural difference", "misunderstanding", and "lost in translation". It may be one reason why humans need to supervise "machine translators" equipped with the latest technology.

The issue of translation oddity has direct relevance to cross-cultural management. In the field of IB, a Harvard Business Review article *When Culture Doesn't Translate* (Meyer, 2015) speaks of the point: "People in different countries react to inputs differently, communicate differently, and make decisions differently". Meyer's point is important not only because of the significance of translation in IB practice but also because it is the gist of cross-cultural management in the discipline of IB (Cavusgil et al., 2020). It aligns with the research theme of language, which has been becoming a growing interest in IB (Tenzer et al., 2017).

Meyer's article regards culture as a system of thought, consisting of regional beliefs and values of preference ("cultural values of preference"), which is the prevalent definition in IB (Thomas and Peterson, 2017). This paper refers to it as intangible culture (Leeds-Hurwitz and Stenou, 2013). It is often explained with individualism and collectivism, among other constructs (Livermore, 2015). This paper distinguishes it from tangible culture (Leeds-Hurwitz and Stenou, 2013). Tangible culture includes such artifacts as art and literature and is typically treated as culture in language-related studies. For example, scholars in translation studies tend to either focus on literature or keep the term culture undefined (Katan and Taibi, 2021). The definitions differ according to disciplinary orientations. Both are valid in the respective fields of study. However, the disciplinary differences have resulted in a gap in the literature: The concept of translatability has been widely discussed in the context of tangible culture but has been left undeveloped in terms of intangible culture. The gap explains why the issue of translation oddity is often expressed with non-academic words as mentioned above. The objective of this case-study paper is to give shape to the issue of translation oddity for better understanding of why intangible culture doesn't translate at times.

The body of IB literature suggests that the distinction between intangible culture and tangible culture is vital for research to investigate language in cross-cultural settings. To sketch an agenda on the role of language for future IB research, a prior study (Tenzer et al., 2017) carried out a literature review of 264 articles in IB. Their findings boil down to two key aspects: 1) theories employed in the subject articles and 2) categorized levels of analysis, such as the individual, firm, and country levels. For the first key aspect of theoretical underpinning, they (Tenzer et al., 2017) report on the following topics in order of frequency: culture, the gravity model of trade, linguistic influence on multinational corporations and new venture internationalization, linguistic relativity, and language-based social identity formation. In this paper, social identity is treated as part of intangible culture (Livermore, 2015).

The first key aspect is culture, which is the most frequently discussed and applied concept concerning the theme of language in IB. It is referred to as intangible culture as mentioned earlier in this paper unless otherwise specifically noted. IB researchers usually use cultural constructs to investigate intangible culture. Cultural constructs are typically treated as two extremes (for example, extreme individualism and extreme collectivism) of a linear continuum to capture the

dynamics of social realities standing between them (House et al., 2004). It is often illustrated as a horizontally placed in line in the literature (Thomas and Peterson, 2017). For ease of discussion, this paper refers to it as the horizontal feature and will present figures later illustrating the feature.

The second key aspect of categorized analysis (Tenzer et al., 2017) concerns how to classify culture-related specificities by level: in other words, the distinction between intangible culture and tangible culture. Literature often discusses this critical point. An influential book (de Geus, 2002) (p. 84) writes of the concept of an entity's persona, originally coined by a well-known German psychologist, William Stern, who developed the intelligence quotient formula: "To Stern, each living being has an undifferentiated wholeness, with its own character, which he called the persona". To explain the concept, de Geus introduces a vertical ladder that William Stern drew in 1919: The ladder has five levels, namely Deity/Divinity/Godhead being on the top row, followed in descending order by Nation, Tribe, Family and Individual placed on the lowest row, each of which is a persona in its own right. Borrowing Stern's ladder, de Geus illustrates a company, for example, Royal Dutch/Shell discussed in his book, using a ladder with seven levels, namely Society being on the top, followed in descending order by Corporation, Company, Division, Work Group, Team and Individual. In this example, the corporation-level persona is Royal Dutch/Shell's corporate character. This ladder explains the second key aspect. This paper refers to it as the vertical feature.

The horizontal and vertical features stem from the grounded findings reported in the body of IB literature (Tenzer et al., 2017). This paper uses the features for its case analysis on the tangible-culture product of AI-generated text that describes organizational behavior, broadly conceived, including employment practice. As for the vertical feature, this paper uses two levels, organization and individual, the minimum necessary for discussion. It is basically a simplified ladder that Stern and de Geus explicate. This paper focuses on individualism and collectivism as intangible culture, which is a system of thought that belongs to humans at the individual level. It compares AI-generated English texts with machine-translated English texts from Japanese by Google Translate. All texts have the case theme of employment practice, which is tangible culture sitting at the organization level. If there appears to be any translation oddity from the perspective of an English-speaking audience, it investigates why the text is odd and why it is not odd in the Japanese sense. These perspectives are intangible - culture constituents in this paper. AI-driven machine translations are chosen for the obvious reason that generative AI has direct relevance to future research for many.

This paper has three assumptions. First, Google Translate renders a functional translation based on the current level of AI technology. This paper focuses on intangible culture embedded in the translated texts to unpack the translation oddity, not the translation process line-by-line. In other words, this paper does not perform a quality assessment of Google Translate. It is to analyze how a target audience perceives the translations, not how a translator makes lexical decisions to render translations. In short, this paper focuses on the end product that Google Translate delivers, not the process of producing it.

Second, Google Translate is generally representative of a widely used tool. There are software systems created specifically for professional translators. They may perform better or differently than Google Translate. This paper chooses Google Translate because it is available to a majority of the general public. It is presumed that the findings possibly will help the public better understand the performance of the everyday translation tool.

Finally, this paper assumes that the generative AI systems in different languages react to a search keyword differently and return different search results. This paper tests this assumption with the findings. It is assumed based on AI's core principle: "AI systems learn and improve through exposure to vast amounts of data, identifying patterns and relationships" (Google, 2025). The core principle implies that generative AI in English learns from English websites. The Japanese one does the same from Japanese websites. The different systems may build character differently, depending on the source-website language.

This paper refers to English-speaking regions as liberal market economies or LMEs, namely, Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, the UK, and the USA (Hall and Soskice, 2001). This terminology is not to claim that all LMEs are the same or to suggest that only English-speaking countries are LMEs. It is to clarify the scope of research: the LMEs' shared characteristics, including relatively high individualism (Livermore, 2015). Japan is referred to as a coordinated market

economy or CME (Hall and Soskice, 2001) with relatively high collectivism (Livermore, 2015). Subsequent research (Gotoh, 2020) (Roland, 2020) supports the correlation between LMEs and individualism, as well as that between CMEs and collectivism. The scope of research is suitable not only because Japanese-related studies come with rich literature (Liu et al., 2023), but also because communication challenges through translation are often pointed out (Azar, 2016).

This paper performs case studies on AI-generated texts concerning LME-CME employment, including job descriptions. The findings boil down to three propositions for future research: First, generative AI embodies intangible culture, defined as a system of thought, akin to humans in cross-cultural settings. Second, the issue of translation oddity appears to be of significance to IB and, as a research agenda, it may be conceptualized for the benefit of IB. Finally, the findings support the effectiveness of the proposed framework that can be used for the abovementioned propositions.

Case Description

It is widely known that LMEs typically use job descriptions as a vital tool for human resources (HR) purposes. It is less known is that the CME of Japan hardly uses them (Asuyama, 2021). More precisely, excluding LME-owned/related entities, Japanese firms have only started using them recently as a trial, not as their primary tool of HR management (Asuyama, 2021). It is experimental in practice to find a way to balance cost curtailment and cultural constraints in Japan (Tsuru, 2021). This paper regards job descriptions as a tool for HR management in LMEs. This section clarifies the case-related terms, presents textualized cases, and performs a case analysis of translated texts generated by Google AI. The Japanese source texts are machine-translated by Google Translate into English.

Concept analysis

Since the 2010s, two relatively new terms, namely job-type employment and membership-type employment, have started attracting attention, especially in Japan-focused literature. No precise definitions of the terms appear available, but literature commonly uses job type and membership type to refer to the LME and CME employment patterns, respectively (Tsuru, 2021). LME employment is characterized by contractual commitment in fluid labor markets (Hall and Soskice, 2001) (Thelen, 2009). CME employment is best understood as a moral commitment, rather than a contractual commitment, between employees and employers (Ono, 2010). This paper regards the two types as the two extremes of a linear continuum at the organization level. Figure *1* illustrates the LME/job-type and CME/membership-type employment.

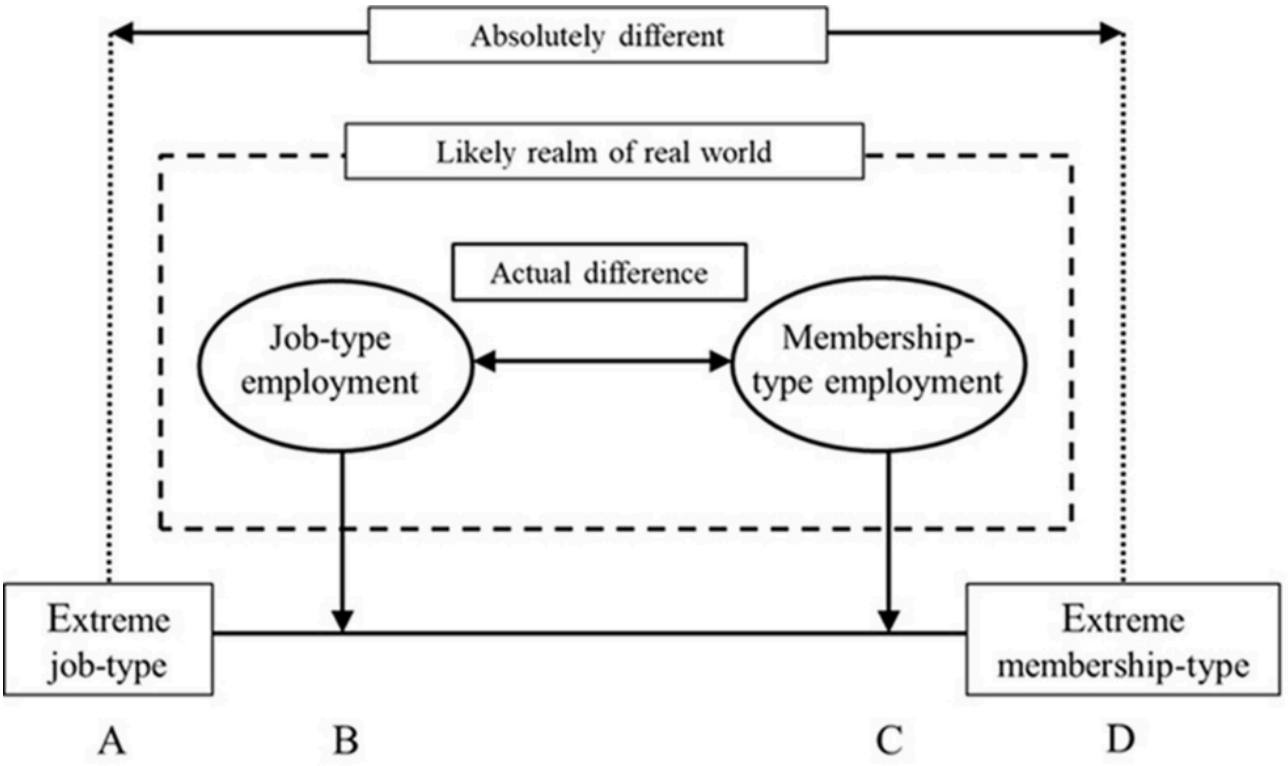

FIGURE 1: Horizontal feature: two extremes at the organization level (Author's own design)

A salient difference between the two types concerns the use of job descriptions. To explain the job type, a recent study (Asuyama, 2021) (p. 3) writes "... people usually apply for a position with a detailed job description, and only desired internal transfers occur". This is true typically in LMEs, standing at point B in Figure *1*. For the membership type, "By contrast, in Japan, new graduates usually apply for a company, and not for a position" and "Usually, no detailed job description is provided, and regular employees are frequently transferred to other positions regardless of their interests" (Asuyama, 2021) (p. 3). This Japanese HR practice of employee transfer is often referred to as mandatory rotation or mandatory job rotation as an English translation of the Japanese term (Abegglen, 2006). It is mandatory in the sense that it is typically a one-way order from the HR department to the employee. To summarize, the job type can be described as the employee's commitment to the job position, whereas the membership type can be described as their commitment to the employer. These types are considered modal patterns as not all employees rigidly follow them. For instance, CME practice is dynamic yet can be shown at point C, closer to point D, rather than point A. This paper adopts the two terms for discussion purposes. The word employer refers to an LME/CME organization with job-type/membership-type employment, respectively.

Moving on to the individual level, the CME value of preference - employees' commitment to their employers - can be best explained with the concept of social identity, which helps to understand collectivist culture. A Japanese newspaper offers the following article (Kameda, 2013):

> Suppose that we have a gathering of Westerners and Japanese. When asked what one does, a Westerner usually answers, 'an accountant' while a Japanese would most probably say '[I am working for] Toyota'. Introducing not one's profession, but one's organization shows that each individual member of a Japanese organization has a kind

> of family consciousness. Here lies the greatest strength of Japan.

A subsequent study by Drucker, later translated by Kameda (Kameda, 2013) argues that Japanese-style management bases its principles on collectivism. In Drucker's words, collectivism is "family consciousness" attached to the employer institution. The case contains three themes: (1) Japanese professionals ascribe their identity to their employer, rather than their profession, (2) the idea of family consciousness is generally shared within the nation, not just Toyota, and (3) Japanese family consciousness is their value of preference that is considered their strength. This interpretation is not to say that Japanese business is stronger than others, but to point out what drives individuals in a society.

Drucker's analogy corresponds to the concept of social identity (Livermore, 2015). Originally proposed in a seminal work (Tajfel, 1981), it refers to a person's sense of who they are based on their group membership (McLeod, 2023). In simple terms, it is self-image and/or self-positioning in the social setting. It helps understand the CME value of preference, as it is a distinct part of everyday life in collectivist societies. A relevant work (Fam et al., 2009) (p. 393) discusses Chinese collectivism: "... a Chinese would identify him/herself as a subset of a society whose life centers on passive acceptance of fate determined by the surrounding community and nature". The shared element of Chinese and Japanese collectivism is that a collectivist's identity is inseparably attached to the group or community, rather than the self. Furthermore, individuals are dependent or interdependent on the collective, even regarding one's fate. This diffusedly shared element explains the CME value of preference: A CME individual's identity tends to be inseparable from their employer, keeping them from moving to another employer. This statement is to explain what drives the modal type of Japanese employment practice (Asuyama, 2021), not to claim that Japanese employees do not change jobs.

For the sake of understanding, their work (Fam et al., 2009) (p. 393) explains the LME values, which seem opposite: "In contrast, a Westerner would identify him/herself as a separate entity whose life centers on self-reliance, equality, and a personally managed mode of living". The discussion suggests that Westerners (LMEs in terms of this paper) are relatively more independent from the group or community, to which they belong in the respective societies. In simple terms, individuals' task completion, as specified in the job descriptions, is paramount in LMEs. This individualistic value of preference is perhaps self-explanatory. Figure *2* illustrates the LME-CME values of preference, using the horizontal feature.

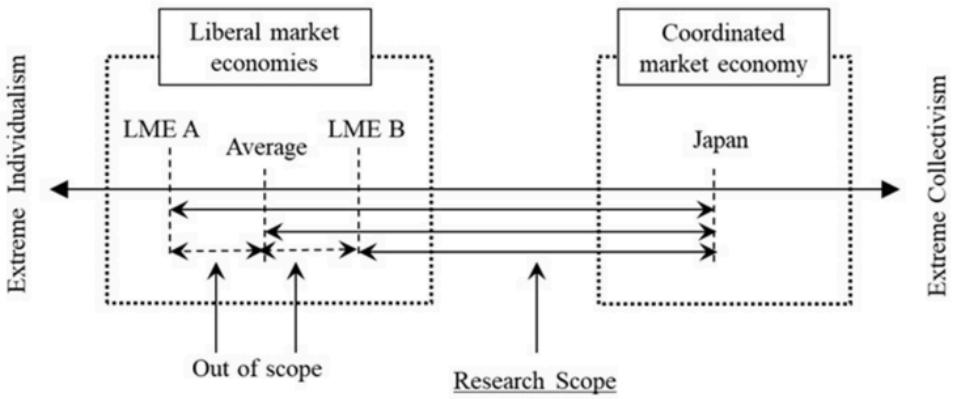

FIGURE 2: Horizontal feature: two extremes at the individual level (Author's own design)

LME A represents the national average of individualism in the country of LME A. The average across LME countries represents LMEs with respect to individualism. This paper focuses on the gap between the LME average and the CME/Japanese average. The extremes represent the extreme levels of individualism and collectivism. This dichotomy can be described as the primacy of self vs. group interest: Individualists are autonomous and independent, whereas collectivists are interconnected and interdependent with their group (House et al., 2004).

Table *1* presents a summary of the preceding concepts, using the horizontal and vertical features combined for clarification. It vertically lists the two levels, organization and individual. At each level are two extremes of LME and CME specificities placed horizontally.

	LME	**CME of Japan**
Employment system	Job-type employment	Membership-type employment
Organization level	Job descriptions as fundamental documents: used to document functions and responsibilities and to support recruitment, evaluation, and others	Multi-skilling expected according to collective's needs: employees expected to prioritize collective directives over personal interests
Individual level	Primacy of individualistic interest to pursue ideal job position requiring commitment to it	Primacy of collectivistic interest to be a member of an organization, requiring commitment to employer

TABLE 1: A summary of concept analysis

LME, liberal market economy; CME, coordinated market economy

Table *1* shows the effectiveness of the adopted method for comparing two sets of specificities. On a broader level, it is a type of interpretive phenomenological analysis, which is a widely used qualitative approach in social science with its aim to explore how participants make sense of their personal and/or social world (Smith, 2003). In this paper, the notion of a participant is generative AI, which machine-learns from a large amount of publicly available websites. As cautioned in the previous section, the horizontal dichotomy is used to present the modal types, which capture the dynamics of individuals or organizations between them.

Case summary

This paper prepares four texts generated by Google AI: two texts in English (LME-A and LME-B) and two machine-translated texts from Japanese into English by Google Translate (CME-A and CME-B). Table *2* shows a summary of the collected data. All texts consist of Google's generative AI overviews. LME-B and CME-B are collected several months after LME-A and CME-A. It is presumed that generative AI output may change even over a relatively short period of time. Appendices exhibit the four texts.

	Headlines and contents	As of date
LME-A	AI overview: definition of a job description; Key components of a job description: eight components; Benefits of a well-written job description: six benefits	June 10, 2025
LME-B	AI overview: definition of a job description; Key components of a job description: nine components; Purpose of a job description: six purposes	August 30, 2025
CME-A	AI overview: definition of a job description; Purpose of a job description: four purposes; What is in a job description?: five items; Benefits of job descriptions: four benefits; Disadvantages of a job description: three disadvantages; Summary: a summative comment	June 10, 2025
CME-B	AI overview: definition of a job description; The main purpose of a job description: five purposes; Main items to be listed: six items; Creation and use: three steps; Relationship with job-based employment: an explanatory comment	August 30, 2025

TABLE 2: A summary of research subjects

LME, liberal market economy; CME, coordinated market economy

LME-A and LME-B involve no translation and are treated as modal explanations of job descriptions in LMEs. LME-A was generated with the English keyword job description. LME-B was obtained with the same keyword several months later. Different dates were chosen to see how/if generative AI would evolve during the gap period.

Case analysis

The LME-A and LME-B texts appear similar in nature. According to LME-B, the definition of a job description is "a formal document created by an employer that outlines the responsibilities, duties, required qualifications, and working conditions of a specific job". It provides "clear expectations for the role, helps attract and inform suitable candidates, and serves as a reference for performance evaluation, recruitment, and legal compliance within an organization" (Appendices). This explanation is essentially the same as LME-A. In a word, a job description is "a fundamental document" (Perry and Haluska, 2016). Perhaps this point is self-explanatory: A job description is part of everyday life for most LME individuals with a job.

Moving on to CME-A and CME-B, they are English translations of Japanese Google search results. Google Translate was used for translation. The Japanese source texts were generated on the same dates as the LME texts, using the Japanese keyword ジョブディスクリプション which is phonetically similarly pronounced *jobudesukuripushon*. It is a loanword

that emerged from the English word job description through transference.

CME-A contains descriptions that appear unfamiliar to an LME audience: the disadvantages of a job description. From the LME viewpoint, the word "disadvantage" is odd because a job description is considered a fundamental document vital for all HR purposes. This oddity can be seen as a translation oddity. The word has come into sight because Google AI has picked it up from the Japanese underlying data embedded in the source websites. Those data are originally created in Japanese by the Japanese. Table *3* shows this odd part in CME-A and the corresponding part in LME-A.

	LME	CME of Japan
Employment system	Job-type employment	Membership-type employment
Organization level	Benefits of job descriptions: attracts qualified candidates, facilitates performance management, promotes diversity and inclusion	Disadvantages of job descriptions: reduced flexibility, difficulties in transfer, difficulties in personnel transfer
Individual level	Primacy of individualistic interest to keep employees' job freedom	Primacy of collectivistic interest to keep the practice of mandatory rotation over employees' job freedom

TABLE 3: A summary of core findings

LME, liberal market economy; CME, coordinated market economy

Table *3* illustrates the opposite employment practices concerning job descriptions at the organization level and cultural values of preferences at the individual level. No CME descriptions exhibit critical grammatical errors in English. The findings suggest that the issue of translation oddity is semantic-pragmatic, rather than linguistic. On the CME side, there are three disadvantages of job descriptions. Below is each line, numbered for explanatory purposes.

Reduced flexibility: (1)

This can hinder flexible working as job descriptions are fixed. (2)

Difficulties in transfer: (3)

Your job description will be fixed, which may make it difficult to move between departments. (4)

Difficulties in personnel transfer: (5)

Job duties are fixed, which can make it difficult to transfer employees. (6)

"Reduced flexibility" (1) occurs because job descriptions hinder "flexible working" (2). The lines contain no linguistic errors but do not quite make sense to the LME sense. "Difficulty in transfer" (3) and "move between departments" (4) are hard to understand. The CME descriptions stem from the standard Japanese practice of mandatory rotation, which is a one-way order from the HR team to the employee to relocate and take a new job position within the employer network (Asuyama, 2021). It is uncommon and may be illegal in LMEs. The lines (5) and (6) are also related to mandatory rotation.

Moving onto another paragraph, CME-A provides the benefits of job descriptions: "attracts qualified candidates, sets expectations, facilitates performance management, supports HR functions, reduces misunderstandings, and promotes diversity and inclusion" (partially shown in Table *3*). Perhaps this part alone appears true to an LME audience in English.

By contrast, it may appear somewhat odd in the CME sense, depending on the audience. In the CME, job descriptions do not necessarily "support HR functions" because they can be discordant with Japanese HR functions explained above as "disadvantages" in Case CME-A. This interpretation corresponds to the literature (Meyer, 2015) quoted earlier: "People in different countries react to inputs differently".

Google AI offers explanations of job descriptions in Japanese because there exist Japanese websites that discuss job descriptions. One possible reason why Japan is trying job descriptions is that many firms are constantly short of labor force with the unprecedented need for external recruitment. Job descriptions may help with that. However, this external recruitment does not change the Japanese style of recruitment for college graduates. They typically apply for a company, not a specific job position (Asuyama, 2021).

CME-B no longer shows "the disadvantages". Instead, it explains the relationship between job descriptions and job-based employment. The term job-based employment is not defined in the search result, but it offers a link which goes to another webpage that explains the term. It is essentially LME's standard employment pattern, characterized by contractual commitment in fluid labor markets (Hall and Soskice, 2001). Google's explanation is sourced by the public webpages that correspond to the literature (Hall and Soskice, 2001) (Asuyama, 2021). CME-B may or may not appear odd, perhaps depending on the audience.

As presented, some parts in CME-A appear different from CME-B, which was pulled a few months after CME-A. It is uncertain whether a few months is short or long for Google AI, but the case findings appear to suggest that their AI is continuously machine learning. This change suggests that, possibly, the Japanese AI system has chosen another webpage as its knowledge source, or the underlying Japanese webpage has become unavailable or has been rewritten to remove the “disadvantages”. Having examined the findings, the following section will discuss their implications.

Discussion

The case findings suggest that generative AI embodies intangible culture, defined as a system of thought, shaped through machine learning. Akin to humans, AI systems can be individualistic or collectivistic, depending on the source-website language. This theoretical proposition points toward a potential research area: cross-cultural analysis between generative AI systems developed with different languages. Finally, the issue of translation oddity, which concerns intangible culture beyond the lexical level, may be developed, possibly into a new concept for the benefit of international business.

Embodiment of intangible culture

Generative AI appears to be an evolving embodiment of intangible culture. Akin to humans, AI systems can be individualistic or collectivistic, depending on the source-website language. For example, an AI system evolves into an individualist in case it has developed through machine learning from English websites written by LME individuals. This grounded finding is considered a theoretical proposition which is only valid in the given case settings presented in this paper. Future research can test it further.

The abovementioned theoretical proposition is meaningful for future IB research. The case findings suggest that the LME and CME generative AI systems respectively have LME and CME cultural values fed through machine learning in the respective ecosystems. Interestingly, the way the AI systems evolve seems to correspond to the widely cited definition of intangible culture: "the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another" (Hofstede, 2001). This is built on an earlier definition (Kluckhohn, 1951). Many IB researchers adopt Kluckhohn's definition or similar (Thomas and Peterson, 2017) or otherwise paraphrase it for their research, keeping the central element of being regionally patterned value systems. Intangible culture may be applied to not only humans but also potentially generative AI. It may be a future agenda, if not already, as generative AI can be seen as a reflection, not a bearer, of culture with the current level of technology.

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Despite its usefulness, the use of intangible culture, including "national culture", or the categorization of society, broadly speaking, is occasionally criticized as essentialism. National culture is a debated concept as it classifies individuals as members of a given society while essentializing social categories can be the basis for stereotyping and prejudice (Bradley, 2018). The idea of essentialism has gained popularity among scholars who focus on a unit of analysis divergent from the categorized viewpoint and/or who are unwilling to accept unfamiliar foreignness. A useful work (Fischer, 2011) (p. 769) clarifies the debate: "It is important to note that essentialist beliefs are not stereotypes. Essentialist beliefs are related to stereotypes but are not identical. Stereotypes are beliefs about the qualities of specific groups, whereas essentialist beliefs provide information about the nature of social categories (including culture) in general." As Fischer clarifies, it is primarily a matter of how to use information, rather than the information itself. Categorization is the advancement of data science, though it requires sensible handling. A widely supported example of this kind of advancement is Henri Tajfel's seminal work *Human Groups and Social Categories* (Tajfel, 1981).

Conceptualizing the issue of translation oddity

The issue of translation oddity, which concerns intangible culture beyond the lexical level, may be developed possibly into a new concept for the benefit of IB. It will explain the challenge of translating a culturally conditioned text. It corresponds to the argument *When Culture Doesn't Translate* (Meyer, 2015) quoted in the Introduction. This paper has presented a salient example: "disadvantages" of job descriptions. Google Translate has delivered this linguistically fine translation with no grammatical errors. Yet, the translation appears odd from the LME perspective as it contradicts the LME cultural values of preference. It demonstrates the issue of translation oddity, which goes beyond the lexical level. Since the issue has direct relevance to cross-cultural management, IB can conceptualize it for academic development.

To develop the notion of translation oddity into a new concept, IB research can begin with the underdeveloped term cultural translatability (Catford, 1965), which may be a point of departure. It can be distinguished from linguistic translatability (Brisset, 2010), which is widely discussed as translatability in the field of translation studies. The popular coursebook *Translating Cultures* (Katan and Taibi, 2021) (p. 33) explicates "... the traditional teaching of culture to translation and interpreting students, and to language students in general, has not focussed on culture as a shared system for interpreting reality and organizing experience (a possible definition for culture)". This critical observation explains the popularity of culture as a study subject: Language-related studies, including translation studies, actively discuss culture in connection with language but tend to either focus on tangible culture or keep the term culture undefined (Katan and Taibi, 2021). A handful of publications have the term *cultural translatability* inserted in their title or discussion, but they use it to discuss tangible culture as Katan and Taibi explain. This disciplinary difference stems from the different foci. Both definitions, tangible and intangible, are meaningful for academic development. Yet, the different orientations have resulted in the concept of translatability being left undeveloped in terms of intangible culture.

The issue of translation oddity is pertinent to not only IB but also other disciplines that deal with intangible culture. A useful book concerning social science research (Babbie, 2015) (p. 10) explains "Today, social theory has to do with what is, not with what should be .... This means that scientific theory - and, more broadly, science itself - cannot settle debates about values". "Values" in this quote correspond to cultural values of preference in terms of this paper. They take effect when individuals interpret reality and organize experience. The quote explains that a regional belief cannot be treated as a theory, specifically in an international setting where cultural values are contradictory. It offers an extreme example to make the point clear (Babbie, 2015) (p. 10):

> Science cannot determine whether capitalism is better or worse than socialism. We could determine scientifically whether capitalism or socialism most supports human dignity and freedom only if we first agreed on some measurable definitions of dignity and freedom. Our conclusions would then be limited to the meanings specified in our definitions. They would have no general meaning beyond that.

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In this example, "human dignity" and "freedom" can be culturally contingent and defined in different ways. Different premises result in different results. For example, aside from the extreme dichotomy, prior research refers to Japan's capitalism as "collective capitalism" (Hundt and Uttam, 2017) among other types. It is distinguished from that of LMEs, rooted in the different definitions of "freedom" in business settings. The book (Babbie, 2015) (p. 10) offers another example with advice:

> If we could agree that suicide rates, say, or giving to charity were good measures of the quality of a religion, then we could determine scientifically whether Buddhism or Christianity is the better religions. Again, our conclusion would be inextricably tied to our chosen criteria. As a practical matter, people seldom agree on precise criteria for determining issues of value, so science is seldom useful in settling such debates.

This example is less extreme and probably easier to swallow for many. It explains that people, including scientists, seldom agree on regionally contingent criteria that shape the outcome of social research. One reason can be that individuals tend to believe that cultural values of their own are "correct". Consequently, an argument proposed as a "scientifically proven, universally applicable theory" to all societies may not be workable in all societies because it is only tested with the cultural values of preference in the country/region of origin.

The book (Babbie, 2015) (p. 10) warns, "In fact, questions like these are so much a matter of opinion and belief that scientific inquiry is often viewed as a threat to what is already known". In academic terms, such a threat can be explained as an ecological fallacy (Neuman, 2006): an erroneous application of what is statistically or scientifically "true" in one society yet inconsistent with what is already known in another. Babbie's discussion corresponds to the issue of translation oddity concerning intangible culture. A translated text may not make sense to a target-language audience, even if it does linguistically and culturally to a source-language audience. The discussion supports the idea of conceptualizing the issue of translation oddity.

New analytical framework

The case findings support the effectiveness of the horizontal and vertical features. The horizontal feature illuminates the cultural differences by comparing cultural specificities horizontally. Intangible culture becomes discernible when it is separated from behavior vertically. Together with the two features, the proposed framework can be effective for cross-cultural research on generative AI, as well as the possible conceptualization of translation oddity mentioned above. Prior research (Tenzer et al., 2017) suggests that the vertical feature can be applied to any cultural ecosystem. This paper has developed the prior research by integrating the horizontal feature into it.

The framework helps future research clarify the definition of culture. The vertical feature distinguishes individual-level intangible culture from organization-level tangible culture. Some prior research tends to focus on either individual or firm level, often mixing them up, consequently ending up with having less clarity and/or consistency with the preconditioned definition of culture. In IB, culture is usually defined as a system of thought. With that definition, a behavior is not a culture but a culturally driven practice that reflects individuals' enactment of cultural values of preference. A thought and a practice are tightly linked to each other but are separate units of analysis located at different levels. The framework helps future research distinguish between individual-level intangible culture of thought and organization-level tangible culture of practice.

Conclusions

This paper has presented three case-specific findings as theoretical propositions: (1) generative AI's embodiment of intangible culture that points toward an emerging research area of cross-cultural study on AI systems, (2) the possible conceptualization of translation oddity as a research agenda, and (3) the proposed framework that can be used for future

research. These case-bound findings are only valid in the given case settings, not broadly generalizable. Future research can test them further. For example, research questions may be developed by examining the Japanese reporting pattern of horenso in comparison to the LME practice of escalation.

The first proposition may be rather natural, as human web-authors write their webpages following their cultural values of preference. Intangible culture is consequently embedded in their webpages, and generative AI systems machine-learn the cultural values of preference through the web data. Machine learning promotes AI systems to "embody" intangible culture. In general, cultural specificities become discernible when compared between culturally different ecosystems. Alternatively said, cultural (mis)alignments may not be easily recognizable in a mono-cultural setting. With the horizontal feature, the proposed framework is capable of visualizing the case-analysis of AI-generated text in a cross-cultural setting.

The issue of translation oddity appears to be of significance for cross-cultural management. It is a semantic-pragmatic topic of discussion beyond the lexical level. Translation can have an impact on firm performance, which is the centerpiece of IB study. As a research agenda, translation oddity may be conceptualized for the benefit of IB. The case findings suggest that intangible culture can be distinguished as the main cause for the issue of translation oddity. Future research can investigate other culture combinations for better understanding the issue.

Appendices

LME-1

A job description is a written document that outlines the key responsibilities, duties, and qualifications for a specific job position. It serves as a guide for potential candidates, helping them understand what the job entails and whether they are qualified to apply. Job descriptions also help employers attract the right talent and set expectations for performance.

Key Components of a Job Description

· Job Title: Clearly identifies the position.

· Job Summary: Provides a brief overview of the position's purpose and impact.

· Responsibilities and Duties: Lists the primary tasks and expectations of the role.

· Qualifications and Skills: Specifies the required and preferred education, skills, and experience.

· Working Environment and Location: Details the work environment (e.g., remote, hybrid, onsite) and location.

· Salary and Benefits: May include information about salary and benefits (though not always).

· Essential Functions: Identifies the care duties that an employee must be able to perform.

· Disclaimer: May include a statement that other duties may be assigned.

Benefits of a Well-Written Job Description

· Attracts Qualified Candidates: Clearly communicates the role's requirements, making it easier for qualified candidates to identify and apply.

· Sets Expectations: Helps candidates and employers understand the responsibilities and expectations of the job.

· Facilitates Performance Management: Provides a clear benchmark for evaluating performance and providing feedback.

· Supports HR Functions: Aids in areas like hiring, training, and employee development.

· Reduces Misunderstanding: Minimizing potential misunderstanding about the role, leading to increased job satisfaction.

· Promotes Diversity and Inclusion: Thoughtful language choices can attract a wider range of candidates.

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LME-2

A job description is a formal document created by an employer that outlines the responsibilities, duties, required qualifications, and working conditions of a specific job. It provides clear expectations for the role, helps attract and inform suitable candidates, and serves as a reference for performance evaluation, recruitment, and legal compliance within an organization.

Key Components of a Job Description

A comprehensive job description typically includes the following elements:

· Job Title: The official name of the position.

· Company Overview: A brief introduction to the company and its mission or culture.

· Job Summary: A short, narrative overview of the role's overall purpose and key tasks.

· Responsibilities and Duties: A detailed list of the main tasks and responsibilities the employee will perform.

· Qualifications and Skills: The necessary education, experience, skills, and abilities a candidate must possess.

· Working Conditions: Information about the physical demands, environment, and any necessary equipment or tools for the job.

· Reporting Relationships: Identification of the position's supervisor and any other reporting structures.

· Performance Expectations: What constitutes success in the role and how performance will be measured.

· Salary Range: Information on the compensation for the position.

Purpose of a Job Description

Job descriptions serve multiple essential functions for both employers and job seekers:

Attracting Candidates: They inform potential applicants about the job's requirements, helping them assess if they are a good fit.

Defining Role Scope: The document clearly outlines the scope and boundaries of a specific position.

Performance Management: It acts as a guide for evaluating employee performance by setting clear expectations.

Recruitment & Hiring: It provides a foundation for recruiting, training, and retaining talent.

Legal Compliance: It helps ensure equitable compensation systems and adherence to legal requirements.

Career Growth: It can provide insight into potential career growth opportunities within the organization.

CME-1

What is a job description? A document detailing the job description, scope of responsibilities, required skills, qualifications, etc. This is what I mean. In Japanese, it is translated as "job description". It is frequently used in Europe and the United States for corporate recruitment and personnel evaluation, and has been gaining attention in Japan in recent years as well.

Purpose of a Job Description

Job Description Clarification: By clearly outlining who will be doing what work, you can streamline operations and reduce mistakes.

Optimize Talent Recruitment: This will make it easier to find people with the skills and experience you need, and prevent mismatches after hiring.

Fairness in Personnel Evaluation: This will allow for a fair performance evaluation as the job description and evaluation criteria will be clearly defined.

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Promoting Human Resource Development: Having a clear job description makes it easier to set development goals and monitor progress.

What is in a Job Description?(*)

Position Name: What kind of work do you do?

Position and duties: Specific duties, scope of responsibilities, and authority.

Required skills and experience: The skills and experience required to perform the job.

Salary and Benefits: Salary and benefits you are looking for.

Evaluation criteria: Evaluation criteria used for performance evaluation.

Others: Work location, working hours, and others

Benefits of Job Descriptions

Increased Transparency: Having a clear job description will facilitate better communication between the company and the employee.

Productivity Improvement: By clarifying the tasks, you can expect the tasks to be carried out more efficiently.

Human Resources Development: Having a clear job description makes it easier to set development goals and monitor progress.

Mismatch Prevention: Having a clear job description will help reduce mismatches after hiring.

Disadvantages of Job Descriptions

Reduced Flexibility: This can hinder flexible working as job descriptions are fixed.

Difficulties in Transfer: Your job description will be fixed, which may make it difficult to move between departments.

Difficulties in Personnel Transfer: Job duties are fixed, which can make it difficult to transfer employees.

Summary: Job descriptions are important tools for clarifying job context and facilitating recruitment and personnel evaluation. In recent years, job-based employment has been gaining attention in Japan, and the introduction of job descriptions is progressing.

(*) The underlined parts are translated by the present author either because Google Translate does not render a translation or the translated text is lost.

CME-2

What is a job description? A document that specifically describes the job content, scope of responsibilities, required skills, qualifications, expected results, etc. This plays an important role in job-based employment. In Europe and the United States, it is widely used for recruitment, personnel evaluation, staffing, and human resource development, and in recent years it has been gaining attention in Japan as well with the introduction of job-based employment.

The Main Purpose of a Job Description

Clarification of Duties: Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of each position to eliminate ambiguity.

Improved Hiring Quality: Prevents discrepancies in perceptions of job content between job seekers and companies, reducing mismatches.

Fairness in Personnel Evaluation: Because it serves as an objective standard, it increases the fairness and transparency of evaluations.

Increased Productivity: Eliminate waste and inefficiency in business operations, leading to improved productivity across the organization.

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Human Resources Development: We support employee development by clarifying the skills and experience required.

Main Items to be Listed

Position Name: The name of the job.

Position and Duties: Specific and detailed job duties.

Responsibilities: Scope of responsibilities in the job.

Required Skills, Experience and Qualifications: The abilities required to perform the job.

Expected Results: Targeted job outcomes.

Working Conditions: Employment type, work location, salary, working hours, benefits, etc.

Creation and Use Create: They are typically prepared by the human resources department or department managers based on interviews with people in the job.

Look Over: It is important to review and update it regularly as your company's situation and strategy change.

Usage Example: In addition to being disclosed as job information at the time of recruitment, it will also be used for work instructions, goal setting, and personnel evaluation after joining the company.

Relationship with Job-Based Employment

In job-based employment, personnel are recruited and assigned based on a "job", so a job description that clearly defines the scope and content of the job is essential.

Additional Information

Author Contributions

All authors have reviewed the final version to be published and agreed to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

Concept and design: Kanji Kitamura

Acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data: Kanji Kitamura

Drafting of the manuscript: Kanji Kitamura

Critical review of the manuscript for important intellectual content: Kanji Kitamura

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