

From Pictographs to Stickers: A Study on the Visual Translation of Oracle Bone Script Characters in the Context of Contemporary Sticker Packs

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Abstract

This study focuses on the visual translation pathways of Oracle Bone Script (OBS) characters in contemporary sticker pack design, aiming to explore the mechanisms and possibilities of integrating traditional cultural symbols into the context of digital visual communication. As the early form of Chinese characters, Oracle Bone Script contains rich visual genes. However, in the context of contemporary digital sticker pack dissemination, it lacks systematic visual translation pathways and methodological references. To address this, the study first reviews the configurational features of Oracle Bone Script and the contextual characteristics of sticker packs to clarify the adaptation conditions for translation. Taking 15 sticker packs from the “Oracle Bone People’s Daily Life” series as design practice cases, the study explores specific visual translation methods through the workflow of “corpus positioning — ancient character verification — strategic translation — dynamic realization,” and preliminarily verifies the design effectiveness through multi-dimensional evaluations by 50 users. The research finds that the visual components of Oracle Bone Script possess a certain degree of adaptability in modern semantic expression. Through multi-level translation strategies, the meaning reconstruction of ancient script symbols in contemporary contexts can be achieved. The methodological pathway developed in this study provides reference value for the modern translation of other traditional visual resources. The significance of the research lies in providing an operable design approach and theoretical reference for the digital innovative dissemination of traditional cultural elements.

Keywords

Oracle Bone Script, sticker packs, visual translation

1. Configurational Features of Oracle Bone Script and Its Translatable Visual Genes

As the early mature form of the Chinese character system, the configuration and ideographic logic of Oracle Bone Script profoundly embody the “pictographic” essence of Chinese character development, providing the most fundamental elements and logic for the re-creation of Chinese characters.

The smallest unit of Oracle Bone Script configuration — the “grapheme,” such as “人” (person), “木” (tree), and “日” (sun) — mostly derives from direct depictions of object contours. It is based on the single-body

pictographic method (i.e., pictographs) characterized by “drawing the object as it is, following its natural twists and turns.” This pictographic method can be further divided into holistic pictography, partial features representing the whole, and borrowing forms to convey meaning, establishing the ideographic foundation of Chinese characters that directly associates visual images with concepts. Furthermore, through the spatial combination of radical components — i.e., compound pictography — Oracle Bone Script derives more complex associative compounds and pictophonetic characters. Its “configurational meaning” is often realized through intuitive juxtaposition or implication of object relationships, presenting a distinct logic of “conveying meaning through form.” It is noteworthy that these graphemes, which bear basic ideographic functions, gradually acquired the nature of radicals in the evolution of the writing system. Compared with the radical system in the later *Shuowen Jiezi*, the division of graphemes and radicals in Oracle Bone Script is closer to the original configurational rationale and is more concise in quantity. They constitute the core pedigree of the visual genes of Chinese characters [1]. From Oracle Bone Script to modern Chinese characters, the configurational patterns of Chinese characters have evolved from “conveying meaning through form” to “conveying meaning through meaning.” Intuitive object symbols have gradually given way to abstract ideographic symbols, but their deep-rooted pictorial origins have not disappeared.

From the above review of the configurational features and visual genes of Oracle Bone Script, it is evident that this ancient writing system contains abundant pictorial resources and ideographic logic, possessing innate conditions for transformation into contemporary visual symbols. However, existing research in paleography mostly focuses on character interpretation, configurational evolution, and historical document analysis, with results primarily serving academic cognition and cultural heritage protection. Although design studies have touched upon the contemporary transformation of traditional cultural symbols, they mostly concentrate on modern interpretations of traditional art forms such as calligraphy and seal engraving, or visual improvements of existing cultural IPs. Innovative research that treats ancient scripts as independent visual elements and systematically integrates them into network social contexts, especially the emerging medium of sticker packs, remains rare. Existing literature on the visual transformation of Oracle Bone Script mostly remains at the level of static graphic design, with limited in-depth exploration of its translation mechanisms and design methods in dynamic, contextualized, and interactive communication. There is also a lack of systematic theoretical construction regarding the “semantic adaptation” and “formal transformation” between ancient script symbols and modern social semantics. This research gap precisely provides space for exploration in this paper.

The key to conducting visual translation and re-creation of Oracle Bone Script in the context of contemporary sticker pack design lies in extracting “translatable visual genes” from its original “ideographic logic.” These “genes” primarily refer to single-body characters and core radicals that feature concise configurations, vivid imagery, high graphic expressiveness, and potential for emotional or action implications. As shown in Table 1, examples include “人” (*ren*, person) and “大” (*da*, big) (person with limbs spread) that directly depict human postures, “日” (*ri*, sun), “月” (*yue*, moon), “火” (*huo*, fire), and “水” (*shui*, water) that represent natural phenomena, “牛” (*niu*, ox) and “羊” (*yang*, goat) that portray animal features, and “子” (*zi*, child), “女” (*nü*, female), and “手” (*shou*, hand) that imply dynamic relationships. They are not only the basic components of the Oracle Bone Script system but also, due to the intuitiveness, symbolism, and combinability of their images, can transcend specific character meanings and transform into visual symbols carrying modern emotions and concepts. The extraction and creative transformation of these core visual elements serve as an important starting point for integrating the wisdom of ancient writing into contemporary visual communication and achieving the “contextualized” regeneration of cultural genes. Based on the above classification approach, this study further summarizes the translatable visual elements of Oracle Bone Script, as shown in Table 2.

As the genetic code of Chinese civilization, the survival and development of Chinese characters is not only within the scope of philology but also a miracle at the level of semiotics. As pointed out by relevant theoretical studies, Chinese characters are not a backward pictographic remnant under the Western perspective of “symbolic Darwinism,” but a balanced system integrating “iconicity, indexicality, and conventionality.” They represent an “ideal symbol” approaching perfection in Peirce’s semiotic theory [2]. This perfection is reflected in the strong systemic immunity and modern adaptability of Chinese characters, enabling them to maintain vigorous vitality through thousands of years of media changes. However, in the contemporary context dominated by digital waves and visual culture, how to activate the “modern adaptability” of this ancient symbol system, moving it from the ivory tower of academia to the digital life of the public, has become an urgent issue. Based on the theoretical premise that Chinese characters are “perfect symbols,” this study focuses on the

mature form at the origin of Chinese characters — Oracle Bone Script — and attempts to explore its reconstruction mechanisms in the context of contemporary sticker packs through visual translation pathways. This is not only a digital verification of the “form-sound-meaning” balanced genes of Chinese characters but also an effort to endow traditional cultural symbols with new “survival wisdom” and “artistic protection layers” using modern media, thereby attempting to prove the strong vitality and innovative potential of the Chinese character cultural system in the digital era from both theoretical and practical dimensions.

Table 1: Schematic Representation of Translatable Single-Body Characters and Core Radicals in Oracle Bone Script (Partial)

Simplified Character	Oracle Bone Script	Simplified Character	Oracle Bone Script
人		犬	
立		日	
子		月	
女		水	
手		火	
足		木	
牛		花	

Note: The Oracle Bone Script forms and interpretations in the table are compiled based on Oracle Bone Script Dictionary edited by Xu Zhongshu.

Table 2: Classification Table of Visual Elements in Oracle Bone Script

Gene Type	Core Character Examples	Visual Features	Emotional/Action Implications	Applicable Sticker Scenarios
Human Posture	人、大、坐、立	Dynamic changes in limbs	Characters, action subjects	Greeting, leaving
Facial Expression	目、眉、口、耳	Local features of facial organs	Expressions, joy, anger, sorrow, happiness	Crying, laughing, speechless
Hand Movements	手、又、爪	Finger postures / holding objects	Grasping, holding, knocking	Heart gesture, sending flowers, liking
Foot Dynamics	止、走、足、奔	Footprints / movement trajectories	Running, jumping, walking, moving	Raging, strolling
Natural Phenomena	日、月、水、火	Forms of natural phenomena	Burning, flowing, natural scenes	Weather, natural backgrounds
Animal Features	牛、羊、犬、鹿	Typical animal characteristics	Fierce, gentle, alert	Animal anthropomorphic expressions

2. Contextual Characteristics of Contemporary Sticker Packs and Adaptation Conditions for Oracle Bone Script Translation

The previous section extracted “translatable visual genes” from the configurational features of Oracle Bone Script, providing “raw materials” for the contemporary transformation of traditional cultural symbols. However, for these genes to truly “come alive” in contemporary social communication, they must enter a mature and continuously evolving symbol production system — the discursive field of contemporary sticker packs. This chapter will deeply analyze the contextual characteristics, rhetorical logic, and production mechanisms of this field, and explore the adaptation conditions and transformation pathways for embedding Oracle Bone Script visual genes into this system.

As a typical product of digital visual culture, contemporary sticker packs occupy an important position in today’s online social interactions. The generation and dissemination of their meaning cannot be separated from the specific “context” in which they exist, the carefully constructed “rhetorical strategies,” and a repeatable and derivable “production logic.” These three dimensions interweave with one another, collectively shaping

the process by which sticker packs evolve from individual expressive tools into carriers of social discursive practice.

2.1 Context: A Multimodal Symbol Production and Shared Cultural Field

The operation of sticker packs is first rooted in the unique contextual framework constructed by their symbol production mechanisms. This is not a single textual or visual context, but a “text-image dual construction” multimodal context. According to relevant studies, images convey emotions and scenes instantly through their intuitive visual-spatial representational power, while text limits or extends images through its temporal narrative and precise referential characteristics. The two are not simply superimposed but form what Roland Barthes described as “anchorage” and “relay” relationships. Text “anchors” the potential polysemy of images, guiding the viewer’s interpretation toward specific emotions or stances (for example, pairing a neutral facial expression with “I’m so done”); at the same time, text can act as “relay” information, supplementing the narrative in the form of dialogue or voice-over, jointly advancing the extension of meaning with the image [3]. This multimodal combination deliberately breaks through the perspective and spatiotemporal limitations of traditional images, creating a highly flattened and decontextualized field that allows symbols to detach more flexibly from their original contexts and be placed into new communicative situations.

More importantly, the context of sticker packs is essentially a cultural-psychological field constructed by “shared social experiences and common symbols.” Sticker packs often adopt a “first-person narrative” perspective (such as using self-created IP characters or anime roles), enabling senders and receivers to become mutual subjects in imagination and directly engage in emotional projection and connection. The effectiveness of their symbolic meaning is built upon the activation of a series of social and cultural “internal genes.” Whether it is the helpless bitter smile conveyed by the “Yao Ming face” or the intense call represented by the “Er Kang hand,” these serialized symbols have transcended their original sources and become cultural “memes” encoding specific collective memories and group emotions. When these symbols are invoked in communication, they instantly activate a shared meaning system and emotional repository, achieving efficient emotional resonance and conceptual exchange across individuals and social circles. Therefore, the context of sticker packs is both an immediate, multimodal communicative situation and a profound, shared socio-cultural background.

2.2 Rhetoric: The Weaving of Metaphor, Intertextuality, and Serialization

On the basis of a specific context, sticker packs achieve sophisticated meaning construction and efficient transmission through a mature set of visual rhetorical logic.

“Metaphor” is the core rhetorical device among them. It is not a simple analogy but a practice of “implied fluidity.” Creators extract surface emotional features (such as anger, ecstasy, or embarrassment) from source images (such as exaggerated facial expressions or classic film and television characters) and establish parallel substitutive associations with target emotions or social mindsets (such as dissatisfaction with work, ecstasy after winning an award, or social awkwardness). This process is often accompanied by image deformation and exaggeration, deliberately omitting non-salient features to create “relative incompleteness” of information. This incompleteness compels the audience to mobilize their own cognition and memory to “fill in the blanks” and understand within a larger cultural meaning system, thereby not only receiving the emotion but also activating self-awareness and collective memory, completing the transformation from personal emotion to collective resonance.

In addition, serialization and intertextuality constitute the key rhetorical network for meaning proliferation and diffusion in sticker packs. According to intertextuality theory, the meaning of a single sticker pack is not self-sufficient but lies in its extensive connections with countless other texts (previous sticker packs, film and television screenshots, popular phrases, and social events). Serialized sticker packs form dense intertextual networks through “quotation, allusion, and parody.” For example, the “Busy Du Fu” series entertainingly grafts the symbol of a serious historical figure, with its satirical and mocking implications highlighted precisely through intertextuality with the orthodox image in textbooks. This intertextuality also lays the foundation for “recontextualization” in production: the constituent elements of sticker packs (images, slogans, sentence patterns) are like Lego bricks that can be easily disassembled, replaced, and recombined. In the continuous forwarding and secondary creation by groups, local elements are embedded into new socio-cultural

information, allowing an initial template to derive variants adapted to multiple scenarios, forming a textual form that is both stable (core symbols remain unchanged) and fluid (specific expressions are constantly renewed).

2.3 Expressive Logic: Cynical Expression and the Discursive Practice of Building Emotional Communities

The production and dissemination of contemporary sticker packs follow a set of practical logic deeply embedded in contemporary online cultural psychology. Its core can be summarized as the discursive strategy of “modern cynicism” and the goal of constructing an “image-action community.” In terms of discursive strategy, sticker packs often exhibit a spirit of “joyful cynicism.” They habitually use techniques such as mockery, teasing, spoofing, and irony to express real-life pressures, helplessness, dissatisfaction, and criticism, wrapped in an entertaining and humorous shell. This is a form of “acceptance without identification” — it does not directly challenge or change the existing order but dissolves the authority and seriousness of mainstream discourse through symbolized parody and exaggeration, achieving a mild catharsis and resistance in laughter [4]. The decadent feeling conveyed by “Ge You lying down” is precisely a humorous deconstruction of the mainstream life attitude of “positive striving”; various “migrant worker” sticker packs use self-mockery to articulate the common bitterness of the workplace. This production logic makes sticker packs a safe vehicle for subcultural expression. From the perspective of social interaction, the deep logic of producing and sharing sticker packs lies in constructing an “image-action community” to achieve emotional exchange and cultural bonding. In a highly atomized modern society, online sticker packs provide lonely individuals with a low-threshold, high-resonance social currency. For example, dialect sticker packs, as “encrypted communication” of regional culture, not only strengthen internal group identity (such as Minnan or Cantonese sticker packs) but also have dissemination boundaries due to their frequent use of slang or profanity. Some meme-based sticker packs have become “secret language” for young groups, helping them find belonging through playful memes. By making or forwarding an image that fits their mood, individuals prove their “presence” in virtual public space and quickly find emotional “kindred spirits” [5]. The anonymity of the internet, to some extent, promotes more authentic emotional expression. Group members achieve convergence and confirmation of cognition, attitudes, and emotions within a shared sticker symbol system. Sticker packs thus become a kind of “online body,” a visualized emotional gesture and identity label, satisfying the fundamental needs of modern individuals to seek connection and recognition.

2.4 Summary

Contemporary sticker packs are not merely emotional icons but comprehensive discursive practices constructed through multimodal symbols in a complex digital context, relying on metaphor and intertextuality for rhetorical weaving, and following the logic of cynical expression and community building. Their context is a shared cultural field, their rhetoric is a fluid network of meaning, and their production logic points to deep social-psychological and emotional needs. The combined action of these three dimensions enables sticker packs to transcend superficial entertainment and become important visual forms and carriers for observing contemporary social mindsets, group interactions, and cultural representations. Table 3 further evaluates the adaptation conditions and translation design requirements for embedding Oracle Bone Script visual genes into the sticker pack system.

Based on the above analysis, it is evident that contemporary sticker packs have formed a mature symbol production and meaning operation mechanism, constructing a discursive space into which traditional cultural symbols can be embedded and reconstructed. Oracle Bone Script, with its “pictographic” core configurational features — its graphemes originating from object depictions and achieving “conveying meaning through form” through component combinations — naturally possesses the genetic potential to be transformed into contemporary visual symbols. Integrating the configurational wisdom and ideographic logic of Oracle Bone Script into this contemporary expressive system is expected to endow digital social expression with cultural depth while activating traditional genes. To this end, this study takes serialized sticker packs as the carrier of design practice to explore the visual translation pathways and methods of Oracle Bone Script characters in contemporary contexts. This provides a theoretical framework and logical starting point for the following discussion on how ancient Oracle Bone Script characters can be embedded into and reconstruct this contemporary expressive system.

Table 3: Analysis of Adaptation Conditions for Visual Translation of Oracle Bone Script

Adaptation Dimension	Sticker Pack Contextual Features	Oracle Bone Script Features	Adaptation Assessment	Translation Design Requirements
Symbol Form	Image-dominant, text-image dual construction	Highly pictographic, conveying meaning through form	Highly compatible	Strengthen pictorial quality, retain characteristic contours
Ideographic Method	Intuitive emotion, instant conveyance	Conveying meaning through form, requires literacy	Moderately compatible	Lower literacy threshold, enhance intuitiveness
Emotional Expression	Humorous exaggeration, cynical self-mockery	Primitive solemnity, strong ritualistic quality	Requires transformation	Infuse contemporary emotions, moderately anthropomorphize
Combinatorial Logic	Intertextual citation, serialized derivation	Component combination, associative configuration	Highly compatible	Draw on associative thinking, reconstruct modern semantics
Dissemination Mechanism	Social currency, circle-layer identity	Cultural gene, identity marker	Highly compatible	Activate cultural identity, construct social symbols
Media Attributes	Digital interface, dynamic presentation	Static inscriptions, linear temporality	Requires transformation	Add dynamic expression, adapt to screen viewing

3. Design Methods and Case Analysis in the “Oracle Bone People’s Daily Life” Sticker Pack Design Practice

The design practice of the “Oracle Bone People’s Daily Life” series of sticker packs constitutes the core application component of this study. It aims to explore how to creatively integrate the ancient Oracle Bone Script character system into contemporary online social contexts. The entire visual translation process is not a simple graphic appropriation but a systematic design process ranging from content planning, ancient character verification, visual conceptualization to dynamic realization. This section elaborates on a series of specific and operable visual translation strategies and methods developed in this practice. The operational workflow can be summarized into four progressive stages: corpus positioning and contextual adaptation, ancient character verification and material extraction, generation of multi-dimensional visual translation strategies, and dynamic realization with format output.

3.1 Corpus Positioning and Contextual Adaptation

Sticker pack design follows five core principles: 1) Accuracy principle: Ensure consistency between image and text semantics, accurately conveying information by leveraging the metaphorical and homophonic features of internet slang. 2) Aesthetic principle: Pursue formal beauty (concise and vivid), creative beauty (personalized), and intuitive beauty (easy to recognize). 3) Engagement principle: Enhance interactivity through interesting design at the reactive level (visual form) and reflective level (deeper meaning). 4) Timeliness principle: Keep pace with social hotspots and internet trends to maintain content relevance and freshness. 5) Communicability principle: Utilize embodied narrative to compensate for the lack of “social presence” in online communication through gestures and imitation [6].

The starting point for visual translation of Oracle Bone Script is content determination. Its core principle is “dual contextual adaptation” — satisfying both the practicality and timeliness of online social interaction while considering the expressive potential of the Oracle Bone Script character system. Establishing a practical corpus: First, from the dimension of expressive content, high-frequency basic expressions in modern online social interaction can be selected, such as “hello,” “thank you,” “goodbye,” and “congratulations.” These terms are universal and reflect the basic functional role of sticker packs as communication tools.

Second, from the dimensions of expressive style and zeitgeist, contemporary mindset symbols can be incorporated: targeted inclusion of popular discourses and emotional labels that reflect current social mindsets, particularly those of young people. For example, “lying flat” and “slacking off” reflect certain life attitudes; “abstract” and “cracking up” exaggeratedly express complex emotions; “good luck” and “go for it” represent encouragement and anticipation. These terms often require restraint in direct oral expression, yet they are precisely what sticker packs can perfectly carry and release through their visual and humorous qualities. Through this step, an initial content list containing 10–20 entries (meeting the upload requirements for a single set on WeChat sticker platforms) is screened and formed, ensuring both daily practicality and a sense of contemporaneity.

3.2 Ancient Character Verification and Material Extraction

After determining modern semantic content, the process moves to the retrospective and excavation stage within the ancient character system, which forms the knowledge foundation for translation. For each modern word or phrase in the list, systematic Oracle Bone Script traceability and verification are conducted. The main approaches include:

(1) Direct matching: Searching for directly corresponding Oracle Bone Script forms. For example, concrete nouns such as “人”, “子”, and “鱼” (*yǐ*, fish), or some verbs such as “饮” (*yìn*, drink) and “射” (*shè*, shoot).

(2) Associative or indicative translation: For abstract vocabulary (such as “abstract” or “torment”) or modern concepts without direct counterparts (such as “heart gesture”), the core semantics are analyzed to find multiple Oracle Bone Script components that can form associative relationships. For instance, “torment” can be decomposed into the relationship between “火” (fire, heat source) and “人” (the bearer); “heart gesture” can be associated with the imagery of “人” (the actor) and “手” or “心” (*xīn*, heart).

(3) Building a visual material library: The relevant Oracle Bone Script forms obtained from verification (including complete characters and components) are standardized, extracted, and organized to form the core visual material library for this design. Attention must be paid to each character’s original stroke characteristics, structural proportions, and pictographic charm to preserve cultural genes for subsequent design.

3.3 Generation of Multi-Dimensional Visual Translation Strategies

This stage is the core of design thinking. Modern semantics and ancient character forms are creatively combined through three strategies to generate specific visual solutions.

Strategy 1: Literal Presentation Method

Operation: Directly use a single Oracle Bone Script form corresponding to the target vocabulary obtained from verification as the main subject of the sticker. Example: For “bitter smile” or “I’ll behave,” the original Oracle Bone Script is used directly as the main body of the sticker.

Features and Considerations: This method is the most intuitive in both production logic and expressive form. It preserves the original form of Oracle Bone Script and has strong academic transmissibility. However, it has lower engagement and imposes higher requirements on users’ literacy of Oracle Bone Script. It is suitable for vocabulary with direct meaning and easily understandable forms.

Strategy 2: Scene Associative Method

Operation: For most vocabulary, based on its meaning, apply the “associative” principle from the Six Principles of Chinese Character Formation in Oracle Bone Script. Combine two or more related Oracle Bone Script components (materials) to construct a narrative micro-scene. Example: When designing “torment,” place the “人” component on or beside the “火” component to create a sense of roasting through positional relationship; for “sending flowers,” combine “手” (holding) with “华” (*hua*, ancient form of flower) or pictographic flower symbols.

Features and Considerations: This strategy logically inherits the character-creation wisdom of Oracle Bone Script and enhances engagement through design, reducing the “sense of distance” caused by “ancient script” and making it more story-like and visually appealing. It effectively lowers the comprehension threshold and

improves the narrative interest and humorous effect of sticker packs. It is the most widely applied strategy in this series.

Strategy 3: Process Animation Method

Operation: Primarily used for vocabulary with strong action elements. Decompose the action into several continuous key frames, use Oracle Bone Script components to create a dynamic process, and finally freeze on the core character form that best summarizes the action. Example: When designing “eating,” the animation moves the “饭” (*fan*, food) component toward the “口” (*kou*, mouth) component with chewing motion, finally freezing on the core verb character “吃” (*chi*, eat).

Features and Considerations: This strategy greatly enhances expressiveness and vividness by adding the dimension of time. It is not only the presentation of a state but also the enactment of a process, endowing static ancient characters with dynamic features and highly aligning with the dynamic attributes of modern sticker packs.

The applicable semantic types, selection criteria, and representative sticker examples for the three strategies are shown in Table 4.

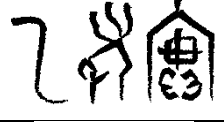
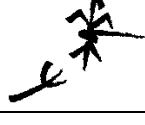
Table 4: Selection Criteria for Translation Strategies

Translation Strategy	Applicable Semantic Types	Selection Criteria	Representative Sticker Examples
Literal Presentation	Direct meaning, with corresponding Oracle Bone Script forms, mainly state or emotion vocabulary	Suitable for vocabulary with intuitive forms and self-sufficient semantics. Such forms have high recognizability and memorability and can convey meaning independently without additional elements, which may cause interference. Therefore, the original character should be presented directly to preserve the primordial form of Oracle Bone Script.	Bitter smile, I'll behave, Giving up
Scene Associative	Abstract concepts, no direct corresponding forms, vocabulary expressible through component combinations	Abstract semantics are difficult to present directly with a single character and require multiple Oracle Bone Script components to build a micro-narrative scene. Through positional relationships and interactions between components, abstract concepts are transformed into visually perceivable situations, lowering the comprehension threshold and enhancing narrative and humorous effects.	Abstract, Torment, Creeping in darkness
Process Animation	Strong action, temporal continuity, vocabulary suitable for dynamic enactment	A single static character cannot fully present the entire action process and requires decomposition into continuous key frames to enact semantics through time. Dynamic displacement and deformation of components reproduce the beginning, development, turn, and conclusion of the action, making semantic expression more complete and vivid, aligning with the dynamic attributes of sticker packs.	Eating, Slacking off, Heart gesture

Based on the above three translation strategies, this study designed and produced 15 “Oracle Bone People’s Daily Life” series sticker packs, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Summary Table of Sticker Pack Design Examples

Sticker Name (Modern Semantics)	Oracle Bone Script Characters or Components Used	Translation Strategy	Visual Description	Sticker Display
I’m Convinced	人 (sitting)	Process Animation	The human-shaped component cyclically performs a kneeling motion, expressing submission and conveying a sense of dejection.	

Sticker Name (Modern Semantics)	Oracle Bone Script Characters or Components Used	Translation Strategy	Visual Description	Sticker Display
Shattered	碎 (<i>sui</i> , shatter)	Literal Presentation	Each stroke of the “碎” character shows a shaking motion, expressing a sense of instability and imminent collapse.	
Bitter Smile	苦 (<i>ku</i> , bitter)	Literal Presentation	The “苦” character is enlarged, with its strokes making slight bouncing movements to simulate a “wrinkled face” bitter smile expression.	
Lying Flat	人、床 (<i>chuang</i> , bed)	Process Animation	The human-shaped component cyclically presents the process of lying on a bed, realistically reproducing the action state of “lying flat.”	
Ascending to Heaven	人、台 (<i>tai</i> , platform)	Process Animation	The human-shaped component leaps onto a platform-shaped component and rises after bouncing, enacting the process of ascending to heaven.	
Slacking Off (In Chinese, it's called 摸鱼 (<i>moyu</i> , petting the fish))	水、手、鱼	Process Animation	The hand-shaped component reaches into the water, catches a fish, and throws it out, depicting the action process of “petting the fish.”	
Eating	口、食、吃	Process Animation	The “食” (<i>shi</i> , food) component moves into the “口” component with chewing motion and finally freezes on the “吃” character form.	
Sending Flowers	人、花	Process Animation	The human-shaped component cyclically performs the action of raising a hand to send flowers, with heart-shaped patterns appearing in the background to convey joy.	
Torment	木、火、人	Scene Associative	The human-shaped component is placed on a wooden frame and rotated, with fire roasting below, expressing the meaning of “torment.”	
Heart Gesture	人、心	Process Animation	Two human-shaped components stand side by side, jointly making a heart gesture with their hands, finally freezing on a “心” (heart) shape formed by two heads and two arms.	
I'll behave	己、老、实	Literal Presentation	The three characters “己老实” (<i>yi lao shi</i>) show slight fluctuating animation, expressing a state of obedience and compliance.	
Give It to Me	手、花	Process Animation	One hand-shaped component holds a flower while another hand-shaped component snatches it, depicting the grabbing process of “give it to me.”	

Sticker Name (Modern Semantics)	Oracle Bone Script Characters or Components Used	Translation Strategy	Visual Description	Sticker Display
Abstract	象、人	Scene Associative	A human-shaped component whips an elephant with a whip, using an absurd scene to express the indescribable feeling of “abstract.”	
Creeping in Darkness	人、伏	Scene Associative	The human-shaped component lies on the ground in a continuous wriggling crawling state, expressing emotional release of depression and decadence.	
Giving Up	人、烂	Literal Presentation	The upper part shows a human-shaped component lying horizontally and waving hands, while the lower part presents the Oracle Bone Script form of “烂” (<i>lan</i> , rotten), expressing a negative state of abandoning effort and letting things take their course.	

3.4 Dynamic Realization and Format Output

Transforming static visual solutions into final distributable animated sticker packs involves specific technical execution pathways.

3.4.1 Finalization of Static Sketches

Based on the strategies outlined above, static composition designs are completed for each sticker, determining the position, proportion, and interrelationships of all visual elements (characters, components, and background elements).

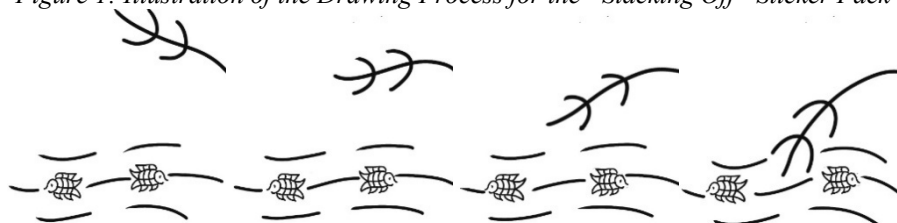
3.4.2 Animation Production Pathways

Path A (Software Compositing): Use bitmap software such as Adobe Photoshop to draw high-resolution static components and scenes, then import them into dynamic graphics software such as Adobe After Effects. Add keyframe animations for displacement, scaling, rotation, opacity, etc., to each component to simulate frame-by-frame or tweening animation effects. This method offers high efficiency and is easy to modify, making it suitable for regular motion.

Path B (Frame-by-Frame Hand Drawing): In painting software such as Procreate, perform frame-by-frame drawing for stickers requiring richer and more organic deformations (such as the exaggerated deformations in “cracking up” or “abstract”). Each frame is subtly adjusted based on the previous one, and continuous playback forms the animation. This method has stronger artistic expressiveness and can achieve more vivid anthropomorphic effects.

Example: The drawing process of the sticker pack “Slacking Off” is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Illustration of the Drawing Process for the “Slacking Off” Sticker Pack





3.4.3 Final Output Specifications

Regardless of the animation pathway adopted, the final output must be exported in GIF format with a transparent background channel (Alpha Channel) to enable seamless embedding across different social platforms with varying backgrounds. At the same time, attention must be paid to file size, dimensions (typically 240×240 pixels or platform-specified sizes), and frame rate (usually 12–24 fps) to comply with the publishing requirements of target platforms such as WeChat.

Based on the design practice of the “Oracle Bone People’s Daily Life” sticker packs, a design workflow can be summarized: starting from modern semantics, undergoing ancient character verification, conducting visual creation through three translation strategies (literal, associative, and process animation), and finally outputting in a standardized dynamic format. This process is not only a reuse of Oracle Bone Script visual elements but also involves the transformation of its character-creation logic and wisdom in contemporary design contexts, providing a reference design approach for the modern dissemination of traditional culture.

3.5 Effect Validation: Feedback Evaluation of Design Practice

To examine the practical effectiveness of the above design methods, this study invited 30 design faculty and students as well as 20 general online users as evaluators (50 in total) to view and experience the 15 “Oracle Bone People’s Daily Life” sticker packs. Feedback evaluations were conducted from three dimensions: semantic recognition, cultural perception, and usage intention, as shown in Table 6. A five-point Likert scale was used (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) to quantitatively assess the design practice’s performance in terms of communication effectiveness, cultural transmission, and user acceptance.

3.5.1 Explanation of Evaluation Dimensions

Table 6: Explanation of Evaluation Dimensions

Dimension	Definition	Evaluation Indicators
Semantic Recognition	Whether users can accurately understand the modern semantics conveyed by the sticker pack	Whether the meaning is clear; understandable without additional explanation; matching degree with target semantics
Cultural Perception	Whether users can perceive the traditional cultural elements of Oracle Bone Script	Whether Oracle Bone Script features are noticed; whether cultural connotation is felt; whether interest in Oracle Bone Script is stimulated
Usage Intention	Users’ tendency to use the sticker pack in daily social interactions	Willingness to download and use; conformity with personal expression habits; perceived as interesting and practical

3.5.2 Evaluation Process and Questionnaire Design

After viewing the dynamic demonstration of each sticker pack, evaluators independently scored the items for each dimension. Each sticker pack contained 9 evaluation items (3 per dimension). The specific process was as follows:

- (1) The 15 sticker packs were randomly numbered E01–E15 and played sequentially, with each lasting 3–5 seconds;
- (2) After each playback, evaluators completed the scoring for that sticker within 15–20 seconds;
- (3) After all playbacks, valid questionnaires were collected.

The evaluation items for each dimension are as follows:

Semantic Recognition Dimension

Q1: I can accurately understand what this sticker pack is trying to express.

Q2: I can understand its meaning without additional text explanation.

Q3: The meaning it conveys matches the target internet slang well.

Cultural Perception Dimension

Q4: I can clearly see that this sticker pack uses Oracle Bone Script character elements.

Q5: It makes me feel the unique cultural charm of Oracle Bone Script.

Q6: Using this sticker pack would stimulate my interest in learning more about Oracle Bone Script.

Usage Intention Dimension

Q7: I would be willing to use this sticker pack in daily chatting.

Q8: It fits my daily expression habits and style.

Q9: I think this sticker pack is both interesting and practical.

3.5.3 Scoring Calculation Methods

This study adopts the following formulas to calculate dimension scores and comprehensive scores:

(1) Dimension score calculation formula:

$$S = \frac{Q_1 + Q_2 + Q_3}{3} \quad (1)$$

where S is the score for a certain dimension, and Q_1 – Q_3 are scores for each item in that dimension.

(2) Comprehensive score calculation formula for a single sticker pack:

$$T = \frac{S_1 + S_2 + S_3}{3} \quad (2)$$

where T is the comprehensive score for a single sticker pack, and S_1 – S_3 are scores for semantic recognition, cultural perception, and usage intention, respectively.

(3) Overall satisfaction calculation formula:

$$\text{Overall} = \frac{1}{15} \sum_{i=1}^{15} T_i \quad (3)$$

where T_i is the comprehensive score for the i -th sticker pack.

3.5.4 Summary of Evaluation Results

Based on the above evaluation dimensions and scoring methods, the scores and main feedback for each sticker are summarized in Table 7.

Table 7: Feedback on Series Sticker Pack Evaluations

Sticker Name	Semantic Recognition	Cultural Perception	Usage Intention	Average Score	Main Feedback
I'm Convinced	4.2	4.2	4.5	4.30	Kneeling motion easy to understand; Oracle Bone Script "person" form features obvious
Shattered	3.9	4.3	3.8	4.00	Stroke shaking effect intuitive, highly consistent with "collapse" emotion
Bitter Smile	4.6	4.5	4.6	4.57	Stroke dynamic effect vivid, accurate emotional expression
Lying Flat	4.7	4.0	4.2	4.30	High action fidelity, clear semantics; strong cultural perception from "person" and "wood" component combination
Ascending to Heaven	4.0	3.8	4.0	3.93	Dynamic process interesting, but some difficulty recognizing "platform" component
Slacking Off	4.6	4.3	4.5	4.47	Dynamic process of hand catching fish vivid; clear Oracle Bone Script "hand" and "fish" features

Sticker Name	Semantic Recognition	Cultural Perception	Usage Intention	Average Score	Main Feedback
Eating	4.6	4.5	4.5	4.53	Highest semantic recognition; users generally willing to use
Sending Flowers	4.8	4.1	4.6	4.50	Action echoes with background hearts; prominent cultural value from “hand” and “flower” components
Torment	4.4	4.6	4.6	4.50	Strong visual impact of fire-roasting human form; highest cultural perception score
Heart Gesture	4.8	4.2	4.7	4.57	Strong creativity in two human forms forming a heart; natural fusion of modern semantics and traditional culture
I'll behave	3.7	4.2	3.8	3.93	Text fluctuation animation relatively flat; semantics require contextual understanding
Give It to Me	4.4	3.7	4.1	4.07	Clear grabbing action, but relatively weak cultural element perception
Abstract	3.8	4.2	3.8	3.97	Absurd scene of whipping elephant arouses interest, but significant divergence in semantic understanding
Creeping in Darkness	4.0	3.9	3.8	3.90	Strong action expressiveness, but some users find usage scenarios limited
Giving Up	3.8	4.1	3.7	3.87	Clever combination of action and character form; clear semantics
Average Score	4.30	4.17	4.21	4.23	—

3.5.5 Result Analysis and Discussion

(1) Semantic Recognition Dimension

The overall semantic recognition score is 4.30, at a relatively high level. Stickers with strong action elements such as “Eating,” “Lying Flat,” “Slacking Off,” and “Heart Gesture” achieved the highest semantic recognition, indicating that the process animation method is highly effective in conveying specific actions and states. In contrast, “I'll behave” received the lowest semantic recognition score, reflecting the limitations of the literal presentation method: although the sticker directly displays Oracle Bone Script characters, the general public’s literacy of Oracle Bone Script is generally low.

(2) Cultural Perception Dimension

The overall cultural perception score is 4.17, indicating that users have a high degree of recognition and identification with the Oracle Bone Script elements in the sticker packs. Stickers such as “Torment,” “Eating,” “Bitter Smile,” and “Abstract” scored higher in cultural perception, showing that all three translation methods can effectively guide users to appreciate the configurational wisdom of Oracle Bone Script from different dimensions. Particularly noteworthy is “Torment,” which uses a narrative scene combining components such as “person,” “fire,” and “wood,” demonstrating the significant advantage of the scene associative method in preserving Oracle Bone Script component features. Users can intuitively feel the character-creation logic of “conveying meaning through form” while understanding the semantics. However, stickers such as “Give It to Me” and “Ascending to Heaven,” which use only a few Oracle Bone Script elements locally and supplement with dynamic enactment, scored relatively lower in cultural perception. This result suggests that designers should use as many verified Oracle Bone Script characters as possible while pursuing dynamic effects and standardize their presentation to enhance recognizability.

(3) Usage Intention Dimension

The overall usage intention score is 4.21, falling between semantic recognition and cultural perception. Stickers such as “Eating,” “Sending Flowers,” “Heart Gesture,” and “Slacking Off” showed higher usage intention, indicating that users prefer stickers with clear semantics, strong emotional resonance, and cultural interest in daily social interactions. In contrast, stickers such as “Abstract,” “Creeping in Darkness,” “Giving Up,” and “I'll behave” had relatively lower usage intention, reflecting that overly abstract or extreme emotional expressions may be limited by specific usage scenarios. Further analysis reveals that usage intention is directly

influenced by the level of semantic recognition: the higher the semantic recognition, the stronger the usage intention for most stickers.

(4) Comprehensive Evaluation and Strategy Effectiveness Analysis

From the average scores of the three dimensions, semantic recognition > usage intention > cultural perception. This result indicates that the design practice was relatively successful in semantic conveyance, with users able to accurately understand the modern semantics expressed by the Oracle Bone Script sticker packs; overall usage intention is good, showing potential for integration into daily social communication; and cultural perception is also considerable, demonstrating that Oracle Bone Script visual genes can be effectively recognized and perceived in contemporary contexts.

To further explore the specific impact of different translation strategies on performance across dimensions, this study classified the sticker packs according to the three strategies (“literal presentation,” “scene associative,” and “process animation”) based on the above scoring data and calculated the average scores for each strategy across the three dimensions. The results are shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Further Analysis of Performance by Different Translation Strategies

Translation Strategy	Semantic Recognition	Cultural Perception	Usage Intention	Average Score	Representative Stickers
Literal Presentation	4.27	4.10	4.07	4.15	Shattered, Bitter Smile, I'll behave
Scene Associative	4.48	4.32	4.42	4.41	Torment, Abstract, Creeping in Darkness
Process Animation	4.45	4.03	4.28	4.25	Eating, Slacking Off, Sending Flowers, Heart Gesture

The data show that:

The scene associative method performs most balanced and highest overall across the three dimensions, with clear advantages in cultural perception and usage intention. This indicates that constructing narrative scenes through component combinations not only preserves the cultural features of Oracle Bone Script but also enhances the practicality and engagement of sticker packs.

The process animation method performs best in semantic recognition because its dynamic enactment makes action-related semantics more intuitive, but cultural perception is relatively weaker. This suggests that explicit presentation of Oracle Bone Script character features should be emphasized in dynamic design.

The literal presentation method performs relatively balanced and is suitable for vocabulary whose forms themselves have high recognizability, such as “Shattered” and “Bitter Smile.”

3.5.6 Summary of Effect Validation

In summary, the design practice achieved reference-worthy feedback results across the three dimensions of semantic recognition, cultural perception, and usage intention. The evaluation data show that users can accurately understand the modern semantics expressed by the Oracle Bone Script sticker packs, to some extent reflecting the expressive adaptability of Oracle Bone Script visual genes in contemporary contexts; users can effectively perceive the traditional cultural elements of Oracle Bone Script, demonstrating that the “translatable visual genes” possess cross-era recognizability and appeal; and users exhibit relatively high usage intention, indicating that the design outcomes have potential for integration into daily social communication. It should be noted that this effect validation is an exploratory assessment aimed at preliminarily testing the feasibility of the design methods. The results are based on specific samples and contexts and do not yet possess a statistical foundation for universal generalization.

The outstanding performance of the scene associative method in cultural perception and usage intention provides preliminary empirical support for the translation pathway that returns to Oracle Bone Script’s character-creation thinking of “observing objects and taking their forms” and “conveying meaning through form.” It demonstrates the potential value of this pathway in preserving traditional cultural genes while enhancing contemporary user acceptance. This finding also offers limited empirical reference for the “bidirectional activation” mechanism proposed in this study: through translation via modern design techniques,

Oracle Bone Script visual genes have the potential to gain vitality in contemporary dissemination while injecting cultural depth into online social expression.

The above analysis and feedback data indicate that the design practice possesses a certain degree of operational feasibility and can serve as a design attempt for the contemporary translation of Oracle Bone Script characters. The observations above provide an exploratory empirical foundation for subsequent discussions on the cultural value of the design practice and the generalizability of the translation model. The following section will further analyze the traditional cultural value embodied in this practice from the two dimensions of cultural inheritance and design methodology, and explore the potential generalizability of its translation model in the digital innovation of a broader range of traditional cultural resources.

4. Possibilities and Boundaries of Activating and Disseminating Traditional Culture in Design Practice

4.1 Verification and Extension of Design Logic: From Semantic Expression to Method Migration

The exploration in this practice attempts to verify the adaptability of Oracle Bone Script visual genes in modern semantic expression and the transferability of the design model.

4.1.1 Adaptability of Semantic Expression

As a highly pictographic and ideographic writing system, Oracle Bone Script's visual genes possess a "meta-linguistic" characteristic that transcends eras. The practice demonstrates that whether expressing concrete actions (such as "eating" or "lying down"), translating abstract emotions (such as "torment" created through the relationship between "fire" and "person"), or contemporary concepts (such as "slacking off" reconstructed through the associative combination of "hand" and "fish"), the components of Oracle Bone Script can achieve creative visual communication through flexible decomposition, recombination, and contextual reconstruction. In the design process, designers do not simply "translate" characters but attempt to "translate" thinking — reducing modern semantics to essential actions, relationships, and imagery, and then reconstructing them using the visual grammar of Oracle Bone Script. To a certain extent, this indicates that the visual genes of Oracle Bone Script are not rigid antiques but a visual ideographic system that remains expandable.

4.1.2 Transferability of Design Methods

The four-stage workflow summarized in this study — "contextual adaptation — ancient character verification — strategic translation (literal, associative, process) — dynamic realization" — constitutes a referenceable design methodology. The core of this methodology lies in the principles of "semantic kernel-driven" and "ancient methods for new uses." It is not only applicable to Oracle Bone Script but also has the potential to be transferred to the modern design transformation of other ancient writing or traditional pattern systems with pictographic and associative foundations (such as Dongba script, Khitan script, and traditional auspicious patterns). In specific applications, designers can refer to this model and carry out customized innovative design for different traditional cultural visual resources, centering on specific contemporary communication themes and media, potentially forming a reference design paradigm of "visual resources — communication themes and media — design practice." For example, using traditional woodblock New Year prints for dynamic poster design on the theme of "festivals and solar terms," or incorporating opera mask symbols into "workplace emotion" series short video stickers. This model provides a methodological reference from thinking to execution for the digital innovation of traditional cultural resources and holds further exploration potential in future practical applications.

4.2 Bidirectional Activation: Exploration Pathways for the Contemporary Dissemination of Oracle Bone Script Characters

The conflict between online culture and traditional culture stems from differences in their modes of existence, objectives, foundational dependencies, and the values of the eras they carry. In practice, this often manifests as collisions between old and new concepts [7]. In this design practice, the contemporary

dissemination of traditional cultural symbols is not a one-way output but an attempt to establish dialogue between modern contexts and ancient civilizations through a mechanism of “bidirectional activation.”

First, responding to traditional genes with contemporary vitality and exploring the “adaptive regeneration” of traditional symbols. Sticker packs, as a typical digital social language, derive their vitality from immediacy, emotional resonance, and humorous expression. This practice attempts to infuse popular semantics carrying contemporary group mindsets — such as “lying flat” and “slacking off” — into the visual framework of Oracle Bone Script. This process can be understood as connecting traditional symbols to contemporary social emotions as “carriers.” This translation is not a forced fit but, as embodied in the “scene associative method,” attempts to return to Oracle Bone Script’s original character-creation thinking of “observing objects and taking their forms” and “conveying meaning through form.” It uses the ancient way of understanding the world to interpret the living conditions of modern people. When users employ a fun animated image composed of “person” and “fire” to express “torment,” they receive not only humorous catharsis but may also unconsciously experience the configurational wisdom of Oracle Bone Script’s “conveying meaning through form.” In this sense, the communication practice transcends superficial symbol appropriation and presents a contemporary interpretation of the intrinsic thinking mode of Oracle Bone Script.

Second, enriching social expression with cultural depth and observing the “deep infiltration” of online communication. In fragmented and fast-food-style online social interactions, sticker packs sometimes tend toward superficiality and homogeneity. This series introduces the profound symbol of Oracle Bone Script, which carries the imprint of early civilization, attempting to add historical and cultural “depth of field” to lighthearted daily exchanges. At the moment users click to send a “sending flowers” sticker, they not only complete a social interaction but also, to some extent, establish an implicit link with ritual and music civilization from three thousand years ago. This infiltration is implicit and interest-oriented. It avoids rigid preaching and instead transforms traditional symbols into approachable and usable “social currency.” Through continuous natural sharing and interaction, it may subtly promote the accumulation of cultural cognition and the cultivation of identity. The communication process thus becomes a continuous, mass-participatory modern experience of traditional symbols.

4.3 Cultural Value of the Practice

From the above analysis, it is evident that this practice represents an exploratory attempt at the level of design methodology, and on this basis, its cultural value is also worth attention. As a symbol of early civilization, Oracle Bone Script’s ideographic logic and pictographic structure provide reconstructible possibilities for contemporary visual design. In recent years, there have been numerous practices involving the extraction and re-creation of Oracle Bone Script elements, such as the “Crazy Oracle Bone Script” series and the “Hanyi Chen-style Oracle Bone Script Sticker Pack.” Designers integrate the formal features of ancient characters with modern aesthetics and internet language, activating the pictorial nature of the characters to a certain extent. This reconstruction is not only formal innovation but also carries certain cultural significance — it connects a writing tradition spanning more than three thousand years with current digital communication, moving Oracle Bone Script from the exclusive domain of academic research to public cultural practice and becoming a vivid carrier of national cultural identity.

In design practice, designers must deeply understand the cultural background and symbolic meaning of the Oracle Bone Script elements used at the beginning of design, appropriately simplify and refine details, respect the structural logic of the elements, and go beyond superficial forms to delve into their connotations, so as to ensure effective information conveyance in the design works [8]. Designers supplement explanations with text-image combinations to lower the comprehension threshold and adopt abstract styles such as hand-drawing and freehand brushwork to enhance approachability, helping Oracle Bone Script shed its “aloof” image and integrate into everyday conversational scenarios. This creative attempt respects the original cultural connotations while employing expressive logic in the new media context, reflecting the fusion of traditional symbols and contemporary communication environments. It is precisely this design thinking that combines academic rigor with communicative engagement that enables Oracle Bone Script to gain new presentation methods in social media and achieve the transformation from static inheritance to dynamic dissemination.

From the perspective of cultural communication function, Oracle Bone Script is no longer merely an esoteric “research object” in museums but, through the lightweight and high-frequency carrier of sticker packs,

transforms into a “daily companion” that ordinary people can easily use, perceive, and even form emotional connections with. It enters chat dialog boxes, participates in emotional expression, and becomes a shareable cultural language. This “activation” presentation method provides new possibilities for the living space of cultural heritage and, to a certain extent, promotes changes in the public’s interactive approach with tradition, offering a reference visual transformation pathway for other endangered or niche ancient writing symbols (such as bronze inscriptions, seal script, and ancient book symbols).

5. Conclusion

In the design practice of embedding Oracle Bone Script visual genes into the discursive system of sticker packs, the establishment of design principles is particularly critical. Existing studies indicate that, as a mature symbol system, Oracle Bone Script exhibits significant differences in character forms compared to modern simplified Chinese characters. Directly copying the original Oracle Bone Script forms would lead to modern audiences’ inability to recognize them, weakening communication effectiveness. This principle also applies to the creation process of sticker packs — the transformation of Oracle Bone Script symbols is not a simple replication of the original forms but selective extraction and re-encoding based on preserving their configurational rationale and imagery features, combined with the visual grammar of digital media.

Based on the above practice and reflections, this study takes Oracle Bone Script characters as the research object and explores their visual translation pathways for embedding into the discursive system of contemporary sticker packs through the four-stage workflow of “contextual adaptation — ancient character verification — strategic translation — dynamic realization.” The effect validation data show that all three evaluation dimensions are at acceptable levels, leading to the following preliminary conclusions: First, Oracle Bone Script visual genes possess the potential for contemporary translation, and their components can achieve effective docking with modern semantics through decomposition, recombination, and contextual reconstruction. Second, different translation strategies have their applicable scenarios: the scene associative method performs most balanced overall, the process animation method is suitable for vocabulary with strong action elements, and the literal presentation method is suitable for characters with higher form recognizability. Third, the “bidirectional activation” mechanism receives preliminary validation in practice: the infusion of contemporary popular semantics activates the expressiveness of traditional symbols, while the cultural depth of Oracle Bone Script adds historical depth to digital social expression.

At the theoretical level, the concept of “translatable visual genes” and the three translation strategies refined in this study provide a reference analytical framework for the contemporary transformation of ancient script symbols. At the practical level, the methodological summary formed has certain reference significance for the translation and digital transformation of other traditional visual resources, but its applicability still requires further verification across more objects and communication media.

It should be noted that this study has the following limitations: the sample scope of effect validation is limited, the design practice is concentrated on the specific medium of sticker packs, and the objects are mainly vocabulary with relatively concrete semantics.

Based on the above limitations, future research can extend the translation methods of this study to more media forms such as cultural and creative product design, short video visual packaging, and dynamic posters, expand the semantic scope of design objects, and introduce more rigorous user testing mechanisms to iteratively optimize the design methods.

Overall, this study provides a preliminarily feasible exploration pathway for the contemporary translation of Oracle Bone Script characters. Its methodological framework and cultural value await testing and refinement in broader practice.

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