



International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Growth Evaluation.

C-E translation process analysis of Pluralistic Development Path of Modern Puju Opera Mountain Village Mother in the CEA Framework

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Article Info

ISSN (online): 2582-7138

Volume: 04

Issue: 02

March-April 2023

Received: 15-03-2023;

Accepted: 02-04-2023

Page No: 489-493

Abstract

In recent years, it has become a major goal of cultural development to build a socialist cultural power and spread excellent Chinese traditional culture to the world. The source text selected for this translation practice is *Pluralistic Development Path and Enlightenment of Modern Puju Opera*. This article takes the opera micro film “*Mountain Village Mother*” as the successful integration practice of modern Puju opera in the micro film field, demonstrating the feasibility of combining traditional culture with modern mass media technology. The spread of the micro film on the Internet is an unprecedented innovation for the spread of modern Puju Opera as well as traditional Chinese culture, with great significance for progress. The English translation of the source text will help audience in the world to improve their understanding of Chinese opera, promote the overseas publicity of Chinese local opera art, and thus enhance cultural exchange and strengthen Chinese people’s cultural confidence.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.54660/IJMRGE.2023.4.2.489-493>

Keywords: Modern Puju Opera, *Mountain Village Mother*, cultural exchange

1. Introduction

Traditional Chinese opera is the treasure of Chinese culture. Translating local traditional Chinese opera and promoting the spread of traditional Chinese opera are the internal requirements of telling Chinese stories well. In the past, the study of the English translation of Chinese operas has been relatively fragmented, lacking in concise theories, methods and strategies. This study holds that the framework of “Comprehension, Expression and Adaption” (CEA) can be the guidance framework for the translation process analysis. In addition, in terms of translation strategies, different communication intentions should be followed, which should be handled flexibly according to the plot of the opera and the experience of watching the opera.

As one of the “four major opera genres” in Shanxi Province, many modern Puju opera works have been created in recent years, but few of them have finally become high-quality works. In the article, the author takes the successful development path of the opera film *Mother of the Mountain Village* as an example, since it provides a new path for the development and dissemination of modern Puju opera, and breaks through the conventional way of transmission of opera. To the author, the traditional Chinese local opera culture will put on a new look if inherited with the help of proper modern mass media. There are four sections in the source article, namely, the classic presentation of the stage play *Mother of the Mountain Village*, the successful attempt of the drama film *Mother of the Mountain Village*, the artistic exploration of the micro-film opera of *Mother of the Mountain Village* and the enlightenments from the diversified development path of the modern play *Mother of the Mountain Village*.

In the first part, the author tells us that the modern Puju drama *Mother of the Mountain Village* was created and performed by the Yuncheng Youth Experimental Puju Opera troupe, Shanxi Province. It came into being after being revised many times, including the speculation of the lines, the setting of the plot, and the cooperation between first-class directors and excellent actors. Therefore, this play is undoubtedly successful. And the writers of the play can grasp the audience’s aesthetic appreciation in the selection of themes and show us the theme of the great maternal love.

It has won many awards, and has also been transplanted and performed by some other local opera genres, such as Henan Opera, Quju Opera, Meihu Opera, and finally creating the effect of Mother of the Mountain Village.

In the second part, the author introduces to us a new form of Mother of the Mountain Village, that is the film version. Actually, it is the first time that a contemporary Puju drama has appeared in the public's eyes with the film as the carrier, and Mother of the Mountain Village has also achieved its own artistic improvement in the process of turning into the film version. However, there is still a long way for us to expand the influence of opera films. In fact, Opera films provide the Chinese traditional opera more opportunities to spread. It is hoped that film practitioners could pay more attention to the creation of traditional Chinese opera films, so that we can attract more young audience to appreciate the charm of traditional Chinese culture.

In the third part, the author introduced us the transformation of the film version of Mother of the Mountain Village to the micro-film version. Microfilm is a brand-new media product that relies on the rapid development of the Internet. It uses Internet to create an open and shared media ecosystem which has changed at many levels, including creation, content, and spreading channels. The biggest challenge faced by the opera workers at present is finding good ways to combine micro-film and opera culture to activate the classical spirit of opera. After years of exploration by practitioners, we believe that the current relatively good form of communication is the form of micro films. Due to the advantage of the length of micro films, it is very convenient to spread on the internet, enabling people to enjoy a complete drama story at their own convenient time.

2. Theoretical Framework: “Comprehension, Expression and Adaption” (CEA)

2.1 Comprehension

The understanding in the process of translation is different from that in reading. First, understanding in translation has a clear purpose, that is, to faithfully reproduce the source text. Therefore, the understanding of the source text should be as comprehensive, detailed and in-depth as possible. Surface understanding, which is common in reading, is not allowed in translation. Secondly, in the process of translation and understanding, thinking is alternately bilingual (thinking in both the source language and the target language) and two-way (understanding and expression). Its complexity and energy consumption are far beyond the general reading and even creative activities themselves. Understanding is the first stage in the process of translation, and is the premise and foundation to ensure the quality of translation. Generally speaking, understanding is mainly based on the following aspects: semantic system, context, background and professional knowledge, logical relationship, and so on. In the process of understanding, we should also pay attention to the meaning implied in the expression form of the source text, that is, the real intention of the speaker. If we only understand it literally, it will often deviate from the original meaning. When comprehending the original text, we often encounter logic problems related to background knowledge, so we need to understand the content in depth.

2.2 Expression

When expressing the corresponding content in target language, we must make clear what should we express and how to express it. Some scholars have explained what the translator should express: if the author's meaning is clear, it is enough to convey the clear meaning; If the author wishes to convey a certain meaning but fails to make it clear, the translator should express it in different ways and explain the details. If the author makes mistakes, the translator should correct them in the process of translation. In a word, the translator should be faithful to the author and his intention. Secondly, translation should be natural in word selection, collocation, sentence structure and information transmission. “Faithfulness” and “Smoothness” are generally accepted translation standards. Therefore, what a translator should do is to make the translation authentic and conform to the norms of the target language. In addition, translators should master the structural layout and logic of both the source and target texts, including the links between paragraphs, sentences, words and phrases.

2.3 Adaption

In Chinese-English translation practice, after determining the meaning of key words, the subject and predicate of the sentence, it is also necessary to consider how the words should be combined in the order consistent with English language norms, which is the issue of word order adaption. Chinese and English belong to different language systems, and the differences between languages must be reflected in the order in which the words are arranged. In order to achieve the standard of fluency and compliance with English language norms in Chinese-English translation, it is necessary to clarify the similarities and differences between English and Chinese word order. Only in this way can the sentence order be flexibly adjusted during the translation process to avoid the “Chinglish” phenomenon in the translation. The specific adaption methods will be reflected in the Case Analysis.

3. Translation Process

3.1 Preparation before Translation

3.1.1 Selection of Translation Aids

Preparation before translation is very important. First, auxiliary tools include dictionaries and machine translation software. The dictionary uses the Oxford Advanced Learner's English-Chinese Dictionary to identify the differences between easily confused words. For example, when translating the word “戏剧”, it is necessary to use a dictionary to distinguish the subtle differences between words such as “play, drama, and opera.” Machine translation software is also used, mainly uses Baidu Translator. In fact, machine translation can be used, but the key is to do a good job of post translation editing.

3.1.2 Preparation of Translation of film subtitles

In the process of preparing the libretto translation for the movie “Mother of the Mountain Village” in the source text, I watched the movie version of “Mother of the Mountain Village” with English subtitles and recorded the English translation, as shown in the table below.

Table 1: The process of preparing the libretto translation

| Chinese film subtitles | English film subtitles |
|------------------------|---|
| 咱母子再大困苦能咽下，你爹他魂灵望咱眼巴巴。 | We have gone through a lot of. Your Dad looks at us in the other world. |
| 你眼看要做城里人，到手的饭碗怎能砸 | You will soon settle down in the city. How do you give up all of this? |
| 莫非彩礼要的重，儿莫怕，妈砸锅卖铁给你拿。 | Don't worry about that. I'll give away all but come up with it. |
| 不是要彩礼，是..... | It's not betrothal gifts but it's... |
| 那是，那是啥，快说！ | It's What? Tell me. |
| 说出来火烧胸膛难忍下，情伤透叫人从心寒到牙。 | Their request makes me unbearable. I am heartbroken. It sent a chill to my heart. |
| 那结婚条件呀，我难说出口 | But what is that, it's difficult to tell you. |
| 实在叫儿难接受，荒唐到家。 | It's difficult for me to accept it. How ridiculous! |

3.2 Translation Procedure

3.2.1 First Attempt

Firstly, after reading the source text as a whole many times for thorough and accurate understanding, the translator summarizes the structure and outline of the source text, analyzes the content and the theme of the article first, then marks the words that need to be clarified for the actual meaning in the context during the reading process, including difficult words, phrases and proper nouns. Use a combination of machine translation and human translation to perform preliminary translation of the source text, and conduct post translation editing and review.

3.2.2 Second Attempt

During the secondary translation process, the main task is to check the accuracy of the translation. After submitting the first draft of the translation practice, the tutor pointed out the mistakes in the translation, and I pondered and thought again during the second translation. At the same time, there are some grammatical errors and inappropriate aspects of machine translation that have not been detected. Then, I checked the translation sentence by sentence against the original text to ensure that there are no misunderstandings and to check whether the target language correctly expresses the meanings of the source text author.

4. Case Analysis

4.1 Title translation

The title of a play is the window of a work. How to accurately translate the title of opera works is a question that translators should consider during the translation process. For the translation of titles of operas, we need to analyze specific issues. Some titles reflect the theme and plot of the work, while others summarize the content of the entire book. Therefore, when translating such play titles, it is necessary to refer to the content of the play.

Table 2: Example 1

| | |
|------|--|
| ST | 《土炕上的女人》 |
| TT-1 | Women on the Tokang |
| TT-2 | A rural woman and three generations of a red army soldier family |

Analysis: Puju opera 《土炕上的女人》 is adapted from Jia Pingwa's novel *Adobe Bed*. The protagonist of the story is Yang Sanniu, an ordinary peasant woman living in the depths of the Taihang Mountains. Yang Sanniu nurtured three generations of a Red Army family on this earthen kang and experienced three times the pain of parting in life and death.

On this bed made of adobes, she walked peacefully to the end of her life. She is a person who has made contributions to the Chinese Revolution, but she lived an ordinary life, without assuming herself as a meritorious minister, let alone demanding repayments from the new government after the founding the People's Republic of China. When translating 《土炕上的女人》, if translated literally as TT-1, foreign readers may feel very confused, unable to fully understand what this opera is about. However, the TT-2 uses simple phrases to summarize the main content of the opera, which is concise and accurate, not only accurately conveying the content of the work, but conforming to the characteristics of the theme as well.

Table 3: Example 2

| | |
|----|--------------------------------|
| ST | 《山村母亲》 |
| TT | Mother of the Mountain Village |

Analysis: Newmark believes that if literal translation can take into account both translation effect and translation accuracy, then literal translation is not only the best translation method, but also the only effective translation method. In this case, there is no need to use alternative and free translation methods for any type of text. Therefore, here I use the literal translation method. 《山村母亲》 is translated as *Mother of the Mountain Village*. This not only preserves the original form, but also keeps the original meaning and symbolic meaning of the title.

4.2 Dialect translation

When translating local dialect vocabulary, it is important to clarify the exact meaning of the dialect. Due to different regional cultures, the same word may have different meanings. We can understand the meaning of a word (phrase) written in local dialect from the context, using a dialect converter, or we can consult local literature or people who speak such dialects to understand the meaning before translating.

Table 4: Example 1

| | |
|----|--|
| ST | 全宝他年纪已到未成家，好容易城里把干部当。 |
| TT | Quanbao is still not married when he is old enough and should be. It's not easy for my son to become job holder in the city. |

Analysis: When translating local dialects, we should pay attention to understanding the meaning of sentences. “好容易城里把干部当” means it is very difficult for village-born

young man to be a leader in the city. If we are not familiar with the dialect word “好容易”, we will certainly understand it as very easy to do according to the literal meaning, causing difficulties in understanding the meaning. Therefore, in the process of translation dialect, it is necessary to clarify the exact meaning of dialect words, otherwise it will confuse the foreign readers. The way of thinking in English is different from that in Chinese. It is more important to express its meaning rather than just see its literal meaning.

Table 5: Example 2

| | |
|----|--|
| ST | 这么好茬口难遇上, 若还错过悔断肠。 |
| TT | This is a good opportunity for him to have a good wife. Missing it, we will regret our choice forever. |

Analysis: Accurately understanding the meaning of “茬口” is the key to translate this sentence. After reviewing relevant

information, we know that the precise meaning of “茬口” is “timing, opportunity, and the key point that should be grasped.” Therefore, we translate it into “a good opportunity”. And this translation corresponds to the following sentence “If we miss it, we will regret forever.”

4.3 Amplification

Amplification means to add some words or phrases to convey the content of ST in a complete and smooth way. Due to the different language habits between Chinese and English, a certain statement in Chinese is originally very clear and no one can misunderstand it. However, if it is translated verbatim into English literally, it is likely to fail to achieve its original meaning and even cause misunderstanding. Therefore, it is often necessary to add appropriate words to the translation to clearly express the meaning implied in the original text.

Table 6: Example

| | |
|----|---|
| ST | 全宝来信时是冬天, 回到家乡是在第二年春天的一个夜晚。 |
| TT | Quan Bao sent his mother the letter in winter, in which he routed his girlfriend and told his mother they would get married, and returned home on a night in the next spring. |

Analysis: When translating this sentence, I have added the information to the letter to make the meaning of this sentence more complete so that it is easy for readers to understand, achieving the effect of echoing back and forth.

4.4 Division

The translator theorist Schleiermacher proposed two translation methods facing with the dilemma of whether the

translation should yield to the original text or move closer to the translation, he put forward: “Either the translator leaves the writer alone as much as possible and moves the reader toward the writer, or he leaves the reader alone as much as possible and moves the writer towards the reader.” Division same as the latter, means “expanding” to the meaning. Division is often used in cultural translation.

Table 7: Example

| | |
|----|---|
| ST | 她和早年亡故的丈夫的最大心愿就是希望儿子大学毕业后能在城里找到工作, 然后娶妻生子, 延续香火。 |
| TT | The biggest wish of her and her husband who passed away at a young age is that her son can find a job in the city after graduation from university, and then gets married and have children to carry on the family name and bring honor to the ancestors. |

Analysis: The word “香火” in the sentence is translated as “bring honor to the ancestors.” It must not be translated as “continue license”. Because the word “license” is specifically used for incense used in religious sacrifices, so we must pay attention to it. If we translate it into “incense” used in religious activities, it will first confuse foreign readers, who may ask “why getting married and starting a career is related to sacrifice?” We translated it as “carry on the family name and bring honor to the ancestors”. It is much better because it can help the target readers to understand the Chinese tradition of inheriting the family blood tie and glorifying their ancestors. Therefore, if we don't clearly indicate what it means to “香火”, they can't really understand this sentence.

Conclusion

Through this painstaking C-E translation project, I have a deeper understanding of the differences between English and Chinese language expressions, a better understanding of the syntax, structure and a more skilled use of translation techniques such as addition and subtraction etc. Secondly, in the process of practice, the translator recognizes the requirements of professional texts for translators' knowledge and understanding. The translated text contains a

lot of knowledge in literary criticism, drama history, dialect culture, mass media and other professional fields. By searching for references in the process of translation, the translator has accumulated more relevant knowledge and broadened her learning horizon. Looking back at the whole translation process, the translator realizes that there is still a large room for improvement. First, the command of both source and target languages should be strengthened. For example, when literal translation is adopted for long sentences, and the translated output may be relatively stiff. Secondly, the translator should have more translation practice so that the translation theory and techniques can be put into application correctly and proficiently. Good command of the two languages, proficient use of translation theories and techniques and large amount of practice will make a competent translator. Knowing what is needed is the precondition for the learner translators to make progress.

Acknowledgements

This paper is a phased achievement of the research project funded by Shanxi Provincial Philosophy and Social Science Planning Office: Research on Multimodal Spreading of Shanxi Anti-corruption Opera Culture (2022YY143).

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