

## Study on the Transmission of Chinese Culture From the Perspective of Big Translation

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### Abstract

This paper analyzes and studies the transmission of Chinese culture from the the perspective of Big Translation. Through analyzing the contents of Big translation and the practical application of Big Translation in the transmission of Chinese culture, we find intralingual translation, interlingual translation and intersemiotic translation all play important roles in the process of cultural transmission. The purpose of this paper is to study how to spread Chinese culture effectively. With various examples, it is concluded that big translation is an important way to promote the effective spread of Chinese culture. We should attach importance to big translation and use it to promote cross-cultural communication and cultural transmission.

**Key words:** Big Translation; Transmission of Chinese culture; Intralingual translation; Interlingual translation; Intersemiotic translation

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### INTRODUCTION

With the further development of economic globalization and the enhancement of China's overall national strength,

China's international status has also been continuously improved, which triggers Chinese culture to go out and the Chinese spirit to spread. Although translation researchers are working hard to spread Chinese culture, they still have a lot of problems to solve. Most of our literary works are only translated by translators and then sold to target readers, which is difficult to achieve significant results with this single translation model. The translations of Chinese literary works, especially classical cultural works, are basically aimed at foreign scholars and students who have a certain understanding of China, or specialize in Sinology. This kind of translation belongs to the category of professional publishing. Although this kind of professional publishing can promote the development of foreign Sinology to some extent, it has lost more than half of the overseas market (Long, 2019). It cannot be regarded as the real "going out" of Chinese culture. So it's necessary to study current situation of transmission of Chinese culture and find some problems in cultural transmission, which will trigger us to find better methods to spread Chinese culture.

In order to spread Chinese culture, it is necessary to translate Chinese excellent literature and cultural works with high quality. Chinese culture is broad and profound, and cultural output is a long-term process. Because Chinese culture and literary works are difficult to understand for foreigners, only text translation (translating works from Chinese to other languages) is far from the goal of cultural communication. So big translation becomes quite important, and we can use intersemiotic translation in the big translation to convert the texts into a form that is more easily understood by foreigners, such as movies, teleplays, dramas, musicals, drawings, etc.. Big translation provides us with a big perspective to look at the spread of Chinese culture. Through the use of intralingual translation, interlingual translation, intersemiotic translation in big translation, we can better promote the spread of culture, make foreigners understand Chinese culture more directly and easily, and effectively

enhance cross-cultural communication with translations of multi-means and multi-angles.

## 1. CONTENTS OF BIG TRANSLATION

Professor Luo Xuanmin from Guangxi University first proposed “Big Translation, Big pattern, Big Data” in the “Translation and Intercultural Seminar of the Belt and Road” held in Changji, Xinjiang, in July 2015. Big translation is bound to attract the attention of the translation community, and they will look at the spread of Chinese culture from the perspective of great translation.

Big translation is a collective and coordinated translation behavior, including three types of translations proposed by Jakobson: intralingual translation, interlingual translation, and intersemiotic translation (Luo, 2019). From a big perspective, Big Translation pays attention to the effectiveness of cultural communication, the integrity of translation. Big Translation can promote the globalization of culture through the interaction of various kinds of translation (Luo, 2019). Translation is not only the activities of translators, but also the activities of people from all walks of life. People from all walks of life like actors/actresses, writers, painters, translators can use Big Translation to promote the spread of Chinese culture.

## 2. THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF BIG TRANSLATION IN THE TRANSMISSION OF CHINESE CULTURE

### 2.1 Intralingual Translation

Intralingual translation is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs of the same language (Jakobson, 1959). For example, all kinds of varieties of the same language at different stages of development (such as ancient English, medieval English, modern English, classical Chinese and vernacular Chinese) are intralingual translations.

*The Sing-song Girls of Shanghai* (海上花列传) was originally a dialect novel and its readers are those who understand this dialect. The number of readers must be the least. In the 1950s, Zhang Ailing translated this dialect novel into standard Chinese through intralingual translation, so that more readers can read this novel, and all Chinese who can speak Chinese can understand this novel. After translating this novel into Mandarin, the effectiveness of cultural translation is better than before. I will illustrate this point in detail in the following examples.

#### Example 1

Source text: 小村又哼了一声，道：“俚勿搭耐一淘去，耐去寻俚做啥？阿要去讨惹厌！”

Target text: 小村又哼了一声，道：“他不跟你一块去，你去找他干什么？多讨人嫌！”

In this example, dialect “俚” is translated into “他”

(he), and dialect “耐” is translated into Putonghua “你” (you). Through intralingual translation, it greatly improves the ease of understanding. And the work by intralingual translation will inevitably attract more readers and promote the spread of regional culture and the communication between people in various regions.

#### Example 2

Source text: 说到“倪”字，却顿住嘴，重又上前去潘三耳朵边说了两句。潘三发极道：“徐大爷耐听口，耐俚好朋友说个啥闲话嘎！”

Target text: 说到“我们”二字，却顿住嘴，重又上前去潘三耳朵边说了两句。潘三发急道：“徐大爷，你听！你们好朋友，说些个什么话呀！”

In this example, “倪” was translated into “我们” (we); “耐俚好朋友说个啥闲话嘎” was translated into “你们好朋友，说些个什么话呀！” The translation of dialects into Mandarin reduces the difficulty of understanding and enlarges the scope of readers.

*Six Chapters of a Floating Life* (浮生六记) is an autobiographical prose written by Shen Fu from Qing dynasty. The work is also a good example of intralingual translation and this work also had a version of vernacular Chinese to let readers understand easily.

#### Example 3

Source text: 余年十三，随母归宁，两小无嫌，得见所作，虽叹其才思隽秀，窃恐其福泽不深。

Target text: 我十三岁时跟着母亲一起回外婆家，见到了芸，我们之间没有秘密，所以我得以拜读她写的诗篇，虽然感叹其文思优美，私底下却担心她福气太浅。

In this example, “宁” is translated into “外婆家”。“窃” is translated into “私底下”。By translating the vocabulary of classical Chinese into vernacular, readers who don't understand classical Chinese can understand it, and even those with low education can understand it, greatly expanding the audience of this book.

Through the above examples of intralingual translation, it can be concluded that in the process of cultural communication, intralingual translation plays an important role. Intralingual translation can spread regional culture to the whole country and prepare for the interlingual translation and the external communication of culture.

### 2.2 Interlingual Translation

Interlingual translation is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other languages (Jakobson, 1959). For example, Chinese classics are translated from Chinese into English or other languages.

In China, translators have translated many classic works through interlingual translation, so that Chinese culture can be transmitted. If we want to translate Chinese cultural classics well, we must consider the differences between the source language and the target language as well as the differences between the two languages. Next, I select two classic translations to illustrate the practical application and the important role of interlingual

translation. The two translations are the English version of the *Analects* by Gu Hongming and the English version of *A Dream of Red Mansions* by Yang Xianyi and Dai naidie.

In the English translation of the *Analects*, in order to make the readers better understand and accept the thoughts and concepts in the *Analects*, Gu Hongming adopted the translation method of domestication, not only omitting most of the names of people and places in his works, but also using the equivalent words in English culture to translate some of the Confucian culture characteristic words.

#### Example 4

Source text: 公孙贾问曰：“与其媚于奥，宁媚于灶。何谓也？”子曰：“不然。获罪于天，无所祷也。”（《论语》·八佾第三，13）

Target text : An officer in a certain State asked Confucius, saying:“What is meant by the common saying‘It is better to pray to the God of the Hearth than to the God of the House?’” “Not so, ”replied Confucius, “a man who has sinned against God, ——it is useless for him to pray anywhere at all, ”

In this example, Gu Hongming omits Gongsun Jia from translation and only mentions that he is an official of a certain country and where he is. He translates “Kitchen God (灶神), door god (门神) and God (老天爷)” in ancient Chinese literature into “God” so as to realize the synaesthesia of Chinese and Western culture, thus improving the readability of the translation. The purpose of interlingual translation itself is to make the target readers understand the translated works better and understand the thoughts and culture of the original works. Therefore, it is advisable to focus on the target readers in interlingual translation.

In the English version of *A Dream of Red Mansions* translated by Yang Xianyi and Dai naidie, the methods of translating are quite different from the translation methods of Gu Hongming. Yang and Dai mainly adopt the strategy of foreignization and literal translation in order to retain the original color of the Chinese culture.

#### Example 5

Source text: 且说贾珍那边，开了宗祠，着人打扫，收拾供器，请神主，又打扫上房，以备悬供遗真影像。此时荣宁二府，内外上下，皆是忙忙碌碌。

Target text : Over in the Ning Mansion, Jia Zhen had the Ancestral Temple opened and swept, the sacrificial vessels prepared, the ancestral tablets put in place, and the north hall cleaned in readiness for displaying the ancestral portraits.High and low alike in both mansions were kept hard at work.

Ancestral temples(宗祠), collectively referred to as ancestral halls in China, are places for worshiping ancestors and gods, and are regarded as the symbols of clans. Yang Xianyi translated the ancestral temple(宗祠) into “the ancestral temple”. The “Temple” basically maintained the religious meaning given by the place and the traditional Chinese cultural characteristics, but Western readers did not understand the concept of

“ancestral temple”.

#### Example 6

Source text: 贾母一见着黛玉，便“心肝肉儿叫着大哭起来”。

Target text :“Dear heart! Flesh of my child!” She cried, and burst out sobbing.

Yang and Dai adopted the strategy of foreignization, kept the original flavor of the original work, reflected the affection of Jia Mu to Dai Yu, and let readers feel the differences between Chinese culture and Western culture.

When Yang and Dai used too many literal translations in translating texts with Chinese cultural connotations in interlingual translation, we should think that the translator needs to take into account the existing knowledge reserve of the readers, and also should expect the readers to be tolerant of accepting foreign cultures. Yang and Dai’s translation pays attention to literal translation, and the readers may not understand the connotation of certain flowers and plants, certain colors and certain images in Chinese culture for a while. However, with the deepening of cultural exchanges, future English readers will find the value of Yang and Dai’s translation more and more, which is why I chose Yang and Dai’s translation.

Through the analysis of the English version of the *Analects* and the English version of *A Dream of Red Mansions*, it is not difficult to find that no matter what kind of translation methods the translator adopts, the only purpose is to spread out the excellent traditional Chinese culture. Therefore, translators should constantly pursue to translate works with high quality, and doing a good job in the interlingual translation is a very important part of promoting the spread of Chinese culture.

### 2.3 Intersemiotic Translation

Intersemiotic translation is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign systems (Jakobson, 1959). For example, language of texts can be expressed by making movies. We all know that the first way to spread culture is through excellent translation, but the translation can’t ensure that the target readers can understand it, and that they can understand Chinese culture well. Therefore, the target readers’ understanding of Chinese culture can be deepened by translating the text into a form that is easy to understand, such as movies, serials, musicals, comics, etc. Here are two examples of intersemiotic translation.

The movie “The Wandering Earth”《流浪地球》is adapted from Liu Cixin’s novel “The Wandering Earth”《流浪地球》of the same name. The movie is set in 2075. It tells the story that in the near future, the sun will be destroyed, and the solar system is no longer suitable for human survival. Facing the desperate situation, human beings will start the “wandering the earth” plan, trying to escape the solar system with the earth and find a new home for human beings. The movie “The Wandering Earth” has caused a lot of attention at home and abroad. “The Wandering Earth” has also been released abroad. Its

English name is translated into “The wandering Earth”. The whole story begins with a strong sense of “doomsday”.

#### Example 7

The beginning of the story tells the time when the story happened. “I have never seen the night. I have never seen the stars. I have never seen spring, fall, or winter. I was born as the Braking Era ended, just as the Earth stopped turning.”

Through the actor’s performance in the movie and the inspiring words revealed in the movie, the thought in the original can be expressed more profoundly in movie. Not only that, but also the audiences at home and abroad can directly and deeply understand the thought and Chinese culture by seeing the movie. Therefore, this kind of intersemiotic translation will attract more foreign audiences and expand the scope of Chinese cultural communication.

The novel “*The Legend of Zhen Huan*” has been adapted into the TV series “*The Legend of Zhen Huan*”, which was first very popular in China. Later, the TV movie version of it was edited from 76 episodes into 6 episodes and landed on Netflix website with Chinese original sound and English subtitles. The following examples are from “*The Legend of Zhen Huan*”, which are better elaborated how to translate the novel with intersemiotic translation.

The English name of “*The Legend of Zhen Huan*” is “*Empresses in the palace*”. The classic line “贱人就是矫情” was translated into “That bitch!”, which is short and powerful and shows the deep hatred of the speaker. “臣妾做不到啊!” was translated into “I truly cannot bear it!” “这真真是极好的” was translated into “That is really good.” Considering the characteristic of movie, immediacy is a great feature of the film. The lines of the film can make the audience understand instantly and leave a certain impression on the audience. In addition, the translation of movie lines conforms to the oral expression habit of the target language. Oral expressions in the movie is concise and clear, which will not bring difficulties to the target language audience. These translations are in line with the language habits of the target language. The target language readers can easily understand the content of the movie and TV series, so that they can understand the Chinese culture conveyed by the movie and TV series.

As the function of intersemiotic translation becomes more and more important, it will become a trend to attach importance to intersemiotic translation. To a great extent, intersemiotic translation promotes the better and more effective transmission of Chinese culture.

## CONCLUSION

This paper discusses the transmission of Chinese culture from the perspective of big translation, and emphasizes the importance of spreading Chinese culture to the world. In order to see cultural communication in a larger context,

we must rely on big translation. Big translation provides us with various means of cultural communication, including intralingual translation, interlingual translation and intersemiotic translation.

Intralingual translation, interlingual translation and intersemiotic translation all play important roles in the process of cultural transmission, so it is necessary to rely on three means of translation. Big translation can help foreigners to know Chinese culture well and provide more forms to let foreigners understand Chinese culture. Intralingual translation, interlingual translation and intersemiotic translation complement each other and are indispensable, which can trigger Chinese culture to go out and achieve better cross-cultural communication. All translation researchers should seize the opportunity to create a big translation, tell Chinese stories, spread Chinese culture and let people around the world understand Chinese culture better.

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