

A Study on the Translation and Intercultural Communication of Yugur Ethnic Culture

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Abstract

The Yugur people (distinct from Uighur) are unique to Gansu Province and are one of the smallest ethnic minorities in China. Their distinctive culture has a history of more than 2400 years and serves as an essential part of Chinese culture as well as an indispensable portion of national cultures of the world. The inheritance and development of Yugur culture satisfy the need for Yugur nationality development, as well as the demand of the cultural exchanges and mutual learning of various nationalities in the world. Combining the development characteristics of Yugur culture with the theoretical framework of medio-translatology, this paper constructs a four-in-one framework for the cross-cultural communication of Yugur culture, namely national initiative, ethnic writing, industry innovation, and talent cultivation. This provides a certain reference for cross-cultural communication of Yugur culture and other ethnic cultures.

Key words: Yugur nationality; National culture; Cross-cultural communication; Translation

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INTRODUCTION

The Yugur nationality is a unique ethnic group in Gansu Province, China. The people mainly live in Sunan Yugur Autonomous County and Huangnibao Yugur Town in Jiuquan City, Gansu Province. This unique ethnic group has created colorful national culture, that is an indispensable contribution to the cultural heritage of the world. The Yugur ethnic culture not only belongs to Yugur people, but also to Chinese people and people of the world. Therefore, the study of the Yugur group should follow the implementation of the intercultural communication proposition of China to go out of China and win the opportunity to stand on the world cultural stage. In this way, the people of the world could appreciate the glamour of Yugur people.

I have conducted knowledge map analyses on the evolution path of Yugur research hot spots in China, and have found that China's Yugur research has gone through three stages: 1) national language and literature research (1992-2004), 2) national identity and education research (2005-2011), and 3) the interdisciplinary vision of Yugur studies (after 2012) (Feng, 2019) and the newest research trend with the Yugur group is mainly focusing on the medical research of the physique of Yugur people and the inheritance and development of the Yugur culture.

In view of the above research results, it can be found that the translation and intercultural communication of Yugur culture are the focus and direction of subsequent research in the new era. In the 1980s, Tianzhen XIE (1944–2020) borrowed the concept of “medio-translatology” from the French literary sociologist Robert

Escarpit. The concept of Escarpit is that “translation is always a creative treason” (Liu 2013). Taking “creative treason” as the theoretical base, Tianzhen XIE advanced comparative literature research in terms of modernization of translation concepts (XIE 2004, 2013, 2016). Translation is a life continuation of the original text in a different culture and context, where new interpretations give the original text different forms of existence. In view of this, the further research of Yugur group is integrated with the theory of medio-translation to cater to the proposition of intercultural exchange of China as well as the voice of the world’s ethnic exchanges.

Synthesizing the characteristics of Yugur culture and the research features of medio-translation, this paper intends to construct a four-in-one framework of Yugur intercultural communication from macro, meso, and micro perspectives. The proposition of intercultural communication of Chinese culture forms the macro perspective and the enhancement and innovation of ethnic writing is the meso scope, while the micro dimension is about the advancement of media and publishing enterprises and cultivation of translation talents. The objective of this framework is to promote the cross-contextual and cross-cultural exchange of Yugur culture and to strengthen the exchange and integration of different ethnic cultures in the world. Subsequently, this paper intends to provide a certain reference for the cross-cultural exchange for other ethnic cultures.

NATIONAL INITIATIVE: ASSISTING THE INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION OF ETHNIC CULTURE

In the report of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, President Xi Jinping proposed “promoting the development of international communication capabilities, telling Chinese stories well, presenting a true, three-dimensional and comprehensive China, and enhancing the soft power of Chinese culture” (Xi, 2017). The improvement of the soft power of China relies not only on cultural creation of Chinese people, but also on the international communication of Chinese culture. MU Ling pointed out that the intercultural communication of Chinese culture is of importance to improve the soft power of China (Mu, 2018). The recognition and discursive power of China in the international community, and the inheritance and protection of Chinese culture constitute a Great Wall to maintain cultural destiny of independence and the sense of identity of the Chinese nation (Zheng, 2012). As a unique ethnic group of China, the inheritance and development of Yugur culture, bound to be assisted by the national initiative of intercultural communication, such as publication, funding, etc., can board the international stage and contribute to the enrichment of human culture.

ETHNIC WRITING: ESTABLISHING NATIONAL CONFIDENCE

The profundity of cultural heritage, the diversity of literature, and the prosperity of national folklore have laid a material and spiritual foundation for Yugur people to establish their ethnic confidence. Due to the lack of native scripts, the shortage of available historical and cultural resources, and increasingly frequent interactions with other ethnic groups, the ethnic and regional characteristics of the traditional Yugur culture have decreased by degrees (Chen, 2018). Thence, the writing of Yugur culture is of significance in particular. The ethnic writing scope of Yugur people ranges from ethnic language, costumes, etiquette, oral culture, and religion and so on. With the assistance of academic publishing institutions, modern media, ritual grafting, and other carriers, it is of great probability to excavate, classify and publish Yugur culture in text and visual forms (Ma, 2008). It is conducive to construct a benign operation mode of the cultural reproduction of Yugur people, assisting Yugur art, religion, and traditional culture to stride across the limitation of regions, languages, and other factors and stand on the world stage with passionate ethnic pride and self-confidence. Thus, Yugur culture is an ethnic star shining on the stage of world nationalities.

INDUSTRY INNOVATION: CATERING TO THE TASTE OF TARGET READER

Besides the support of national initiative and the writing of Yugur culture, the intercultural communication of Yugur people needs the assistance of publishing and media industries. According to the statistics from National Office for Philosophy and Social Sciences (<http://www.nopss.gov.cn/GB/219469/431031/index.html>) in China, the number of Chinese academic translation projects has increased year by year, from 113 in 2015 to 154 in 2019, and the number of 2018 is even 185. Among these projects, research on ethnic issues and art are aimed at serving the intercultural exchange of Chinese culture and art. Thence, Yugur people have the opportunity to take advantage of Chinese academic translation projects to stimulate the intercultural communication of their distinctive culture.

However, the reception of the ethnic and art translation overseas is unsatisfactory, largely because of the “language gap” and “time difference” in the intercultural exchange of Chinese culture (Xie, 2011). Other factors include insufficient investigation of foreign market demands, inaccurate comprehension of the readers’ taste, inadequate understanding of translation, and shortage of translation talents (Jia, 2017). Therefore, in terms of improving the current situation of intercultural communication of Chinese academic works, the cultural translation of ethnic

groups should renovate a new practical path: including investigation of readers' preferences, advanced media means, and social demands, etc. On the basis of Yugur innovation and translation, the exchange and integration of Yugur culture with other cultures can pave the way for the performance of Yugur culture on the world stage.

TALENT CULTIVATION: FOCUSING ON CULTURE

With the support of national initiative, ethnic writing, and industry innovation, the intercultural communication of Yugur culture has a general framework of policy guarantee, cultural content, and transmission channels. However, a link of importance is needed in the whole process of intercultural exchange, namely, translation. The translator is the bridge of cultural exchange between China and the West. The quality of translation is closely related to the efficiency of communication. In the light of medio-translatology of Tianzhen XIE, the national attribution of translated literature is consistent with the nationality of the translator (Xie, 2008). Therefore, it is of urgency to set up a translation research team (Xie, 2012) to cultivate translation talents in the context of the new era, providing creators to enrich Chinese literature and practitioners for the intercultural exchange of Chinese literature. According to *National Standards for the Quality of Undergraduate Teaching in Translation* in China, the major of translation aims to cultivate students of competence, morality, broad international vision, profound humanistic quality, and good professional ethics. In addition, translation majors should possess bilingual ability, cross-cultural communication ability, translation ability, critical thinking ability, and innovation ability. In addition, they should be people of versatility in foreign affairs, economy and trade, education, culture, and science.

In accordance with the requirements of national standards, colleges and universities having translation majors need to set up their own "school standards" (Li, 2018). Combining cultivation of general-purpose talents with regional characteristics and demands, the concentration of universities and colleges should form orientation focus, such as cultivation of diplomatic, economic, and trade or cultural translation talents, etc. An example in Gansu Province, China is an illustration. The focus of the translation major in a university in Gansu Province is the cultivation of cultural translation talents. Besides general translation courses, the theoretical curriculum also includes Dunhuang culture and ethnic cultures of Gansu Province. A practice platform of this university is established, named Gansu Cultural Translation and Interpreting Center. This platform satisfies the intercultural communication needs of local economic and cultural development in Gansu Province. Therefore, colleges and universities with translation majors in Gansu

Province have the facilitation and orientation to cultivate translation talents of ethnic cultures, for instance, Yugur culture, for the purpose of intercultural communication of ethnic culture and Chinese culture.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of the analyses of the knowledge map of the research on Yugur people, the developing trend of Yugur research is the inheritance and development of Yugur culture. Therefore, in line with the initiative of intercultural communication of China and the concepts of medio-translatology, this paper puts forward a four-in-one framework, namely, national initiative, ethnic writing, industry innovation, and talent cultivation, to stimulate the intercultural communication of Yugur culture. The study of Yugur culture should rely on the initiative policy for Chinese culture, strengthen the ethnic writing of Yugur people, and cultivate cultural translation talents with the assistance of innovative development of cultural translation industry. Subsequently, Yugur culture can step out of China and enter the world, a sustainable way to promote the inheritance and development of Yugur culture and the prosperity of world culture.

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