

A Historical Analysis of Chinese Songs Translation

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Abstract: On the basis of extensive collection, reading and sorting, this paper reviews and analyzes the development process of Chinese scholars' research on song translation, and divides the development stage of Chinese songs translation research into the accumulation stage of practical experience and the exploration stage of translation theory, in which the exploration stage of translation theory is divided into the embryonic stage, the stable stage and the active stage.

Keywords: Chinese songs; Song translation; Historical Studies

Introduction

Song translation plays an important role in strengthening Sino foreign artistic and cultural exchanges and enhancing international friendship. After being translated into Chinese, foreign songs can be more widely spread, and Chinese people can learn about exotic customs from them; In addition, the translation and introduction of China's excellent songs can help the world understand China and improve China's cultural soft power. However, the music and translation circles in China have always attached great importance to the practice of song translation, and seldom studied it. It was not until the 1990s, with the rise of multimodal discourse research and the expansion of the scope of translation studies, that this forgotten field gradually received attention, and the number of related works increased. However, at present, no scholar has made a systematic study of the history of song translation research in China. Many early important documents have never been mentioned, and recent research results are scattered and unsystematic. The lack of knowledge of previous studies is obviously not conducive

use of characters, and students can experience the different visual modeling beauty of calligraphy line art, as well as the philosophy of morality and self-cultivation. Through the appreciation of ancient masterpieces, we can explore the emotional expression of calligraphers in the complex artistic conception. Strengthen the calligraphy students' learning of basic knowledge, increase their sense of national pride, and stimulate their sense of cultural identity.

According to the characteristics of the course of Chinese calligraphy history, students can actively participate in the interpretation of the content written in the calligraphy works of calligraphers of past dynasties by reversing the design of the classroom to adapt to the design of teaching content. Through group discussion, each student can join in the exploration of calligraphy culture, consolidate the theoretical foundation of students' calligraphy in the first grade, and learn Chinese cultural history and ancient calligraphy theory in the second grade. Through communication with the teachers of Chinese cultural history and ancient book theory, it is found that the freshmen's foundation of learning ancient book theory and cultural history has been significantly improved and the learning efficiency of these two courses has been improved.

3.3 Cultivate students' cultural innovation spirit

The calligraphy history course is not only a process of calligraphy culture inheritance, but also a process of ancient calligraphy art generation, and also a process of character creation and development for students majoring in calligraphy (calligraphy education).

The knowledge of calligraphy history course includes four aspects: the evolution of character structure, the change of calligraphy theory, the interpretation of character and calligraphy, and the cultivation of human cultivation. Through the whole semester's study, each student can feel the continuous innovation of calligraphy culture and art with the changes of the times, and constantly create new historical marks. In the learning of calligraphy theory, students can be connected with calligraphy practice courses. In the practice courses, students can create and copy each calligraphy style by calligraphers who have written ancient works of all ages, from which they can consciously feel the changes of calligraphy font structure and character structure.

After thousands of years of reform and development, the history of calligraphy culture and art contains character changes and literati's accomplishments, which not only requires us today's young college students to inherit, promote and innovate calligraphy art culture, but also shoulder a lofty mission in promoting the popularization and dissemination of calligraphy art culture and realizing the rejuvenation of calligraphy culture and art in the new era. At present, we attach great importance to the study of calligraphy history theory by students majoring in calligraphy, break through the importance of basic Chinese calligraphy education, and cultivate the successors of calligraphy art and culture.

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to the further development of song translation studies. In view of this, the author traces back the development of song translation research in China in stages through extensive collection and reading of research literature. It is hoped that the sorting out of this paper can deepen the understanding of academic colleagues on song translation research and encourage more people to devote themselves to this field.

1. Development stage of Chinese songs translation research

After reading and sorting out all the literature, I conclude that today, the research process of song translation in China can be divided into two stages: one is the "practical experience accumulation stage" from the 1940s to the 1980s, and the other is the "translation theory exploration stage" since the 1990s. The latter can be specifically divided into three periods: "embryonic period" (1990-1999), "stable period" (2000-2008) and "active period" (since 2009).

1.1 Practical experience accumulation stage

The earliest literature collected by the author can be traced back to the Anti Japanese War period, that is, the article "How do I translate songs" published by Zhao Ji (1916-2001), a famous contemporary music theorist and music educator, on September 4, 1944, was published again in the Journal of the Central Conservatory of Music in 2004. In his article, Mr. Zhao explained his translation experience in detail, in which he talked about song translation "is not only a matter of faithfulness, expressiveness and elegance", "the main thing is to be able to sing and easy to sing". In order to be able to sing, when necessary, "it can be abridged or free translated, or even revised". As the postscript of the journal editor said, this article "although short, it expresses the process, principles and experience of the author's song translation, and has its historical value and reference significance".

In the 1950s, the practice of song translation in China was booming. Although the rich practice of song translation and matching had not yet led to theoretical exploration, few people began to think about the overall situation of song translation and matching. Xue Fan, a song translator who devoted his life to the translation and dissemination of foreign songs, is one of them. In 1953, he wrote an article in People's Music pointing out that there were three problems in the translation of many songs at that time: (1) the lyrics lacked concise and beautiful language; (2) Illegitimate and inappropriate wording; (3) The translation and melody are uneven. At the end of the article, it was emphasized that "song translators or editors of song journals should further improve their professional and political level and literary accomplishment; enrich their own language; and master the law of the combination of poetry and songs." The three problems put forward by Mr. Xue are still common in today's translated songs, and his advice on improving literary accomplishment and mastering the law of the combination of poetry and music is still of great practical significance today.

In the 1960s and 1970s, due to historical reasons, the song translation and matching activities in China fell into silence. In addition to an interlocutory essay in People's Music that involves the coordination of lyrics and music sentences, it is difficult to find other documents.

The 1980s after the implementation of reform and opening up was another brilliant period for the translation and introduction of foreign songs. The study of song translation improved slightly during this period. There has been a small upsurge of research on the translation of the Internationale in the domestic translation circle. Especially in 1988, with the 100th anniversary of the first performance of the Internationale, the relevant parties also started to collect new translations of the lyrics, which further promoted this discussion. These articles usually discuss the translated lyrics from the perspective of politics and language, focusing on how to be faithful to the original meaning, with little consideration from the perspective of singing.

However, in the 1980s, there were two other articles related to the issue of music score, and the research object was very unique. Shi Zhongxiao introduced in detail the metrical features and the classification of rhymes of Kazakh folk songs, summarized 9 aspects of the translation experience of reproducing the metrical patterns, and emphasized that "the key is to grasp the steps" of the songs. Li Yiyin, who is good at the translation of ancient poetry and prose, innovatively takes the English translation of ancient lyrics as the research object, and believes that the translation of ancient lyrics is different from the translation of old style poetry, and its characteristics are that it must still be able to enjoy music and sing; The first purpose of translation is to "let the performers who understand English sing to the people who understand English", and the second is to "let the people who understand English read as literature". In addition, he also specially discussed three considerations in terms of material selection, word selection and meaning expression in translation technology. Compared with the essays on "one thing, one discussion" in the early stage of the study, the opinions put forward in this paper are much more mature and the argumentation is much more systematic.

On the whole, since the 1940s, the early literature of song translation studies in China has generally been based on empirical ramblings, with insufficient scientific elucidation. This feature was inevitable under the historical environment at that time. Moreover, the traditional translation research in China has been confined to the research paradigm of literature for a long time, and has been satisfied with "generalization based on personal subjective experience, random comments, quotations and notes of zero chapter phrases". Of course, the early stage of song translation research is no exception. In any case, the specific experience summarized by the front-line translators and interpreters is a valuable spiritual treasure for future generations.

1.2 Exploration stage of translation theory

In the 1990s, the practice of song translation declined due to various reasons. However, the study of song translation has not fallen into depression. With the introduction and translation of western translation theories such as communication theory school, functional school, cultural school and hermeneutic school, translation studies in China have jumped out of the traditional paradigm of literary school. Accordingly, the study of song translation has become more rational and has gradually attached importance to the exploration of theories with universal guiding significance.

1.2.1 Germination period: 1990-1999

In the embryonic stage of theoretical exploration, the number of relevant literature is still small, but there are many new topics and important assertions.

Hu Zegang pointed out when discussing the translation of the lyrics of Shakespeare's plays that the lyrics of Shakespeare's plays are musical literature written for singing. The ideal Chinese translation "should not only faithfully reproduce the meaning of the original text, but more importantly, should be able to sing with the tune". He summarized this requirement as "faithful and smooth", and believed that the two complement each other, and should focus on "smooth" in music. "Faithfulness and fluency" should be the first clear principle of song translation put forward by Chinese scholars. While Shakespearean drama scholars are generally keen to discuss the literariness of Shakespeare's works and explore how to "believe" in the original text, Hu Zegang has a unique eye for its musicality, which has a strong innovative significance.

In 1996, Wang Keming took the lead in introducing elements of western translation theory into the study of song translation and made an in-depth and systematic analysis of "equivalence" in song translation. Combining the difficulties and purposes of song translation, he proposed three equivalent standards (semantic equivalence, formal equivalence, verve equivalence) and three translation principles (macro in mind, micro in hand, reasonable distortion) for song translation based on the discrimination and analysis of Nida's concept of "equivalence". In the following ten years, although many scholars have also studied song translation based on Nida's equivalence theory, the author believes that there are few novel ideas that jump out of this framework.

Zhang Zhiqiang's "Translation of English Lyrics" is the first research paper on song translation that appeared in the journals of colleges and universities, which mentioned the problems of translation principles and methods. Zhang Zhiqiang suggested that the translation principles of Liu Chongde's "faithfulness, expressiveness and incisiveness" and Xu Yuanchong's "form, sound and meaning" should be used for reference; In terms of translation methods, he got inspiration from Bian Zhilin and Wang Zuoliang's "poetry translation" and put forward the idea of "song translation". Although there is no specific elaboration, these preliminary ideas provide ideas for later exploration by some scholars.

In 1999, the first monograph in the field of song translation in China, *Opera Translation and Research*. The author Sun Huishuang is the first and only French opera translator in China. In his book, he introduces in detail the beginning and end of the translation activities of five famous western operas, briefly discusses some theoretical points of opera translation, focuses on the principles of song matching and translation steps, and compares opera translation with the translation of science and technology, literature, drama, film, poetry, etc., fully highlighting the special "marginal charm" of the former. Although the systematicness of these discourses is still lacking, it is self-evident that they were the first ones.

1.2.2 Stable period: 2000~2008

With the advent of the new century, China's song translation research has entered a new stage, and more people, including college teachers and students, have begun to pay attention to song translation. The research in this period paid more attention to the scientific nature and developed steadily as a whole.

In 2002, another monograph in the field of song translation, *Song Translation Exploration and Practice*, was published. This book is the crystallization of nearly half a century of practice and research by Mr. Xue Fan. It is the first and only introductory book of song translation theory in China at present, and represents the commanding point of experience summary of song translation. The whole book demonstrates the feasibility, necessity and particularity of song translation, expounds the translation skills in rhythm, rhythm and tone, discusses many factors closely related to song translation, such as music style, cultural differences and language phenomena, and finally reviews the history of Chinese song translation. On the whole, this book is an attempt to establish a theoretical framework for song translation, which has played a leading role. Later, some scholars also made a special study of Xue Fan's song translation theory based on this book.

In the same year, Li Cheng's *English Chinese Translation of Lyrics* was the first paper published in China Translation in the field of song translation research in the new century. It mainly discussed the specific problems in the translation of rhythm, sentence reading, tone, and the restrictive role of music style. Many of these views coincided with Mr. Xue Fan.

One of the major exploration angles of this period was German functionalism, mainly involving teleology and text typology. Under the guidance of the theory of this school, the first dissertation on song translation, which took song translation as the research object, explored the principles, standards and techniques of translation from the starting point of seeking translation purposes. While discussing Les's text typology, Wu Ailing introduced the research on the translation of auditory media texts in China, especially the song translation.

In addition, Wang Keming wrote an article in 2006 to discuss the process and evaluation criteria of Chinese translation of foreign vocal music works. His consideration of the translation process is quite meticulous, involving all aspects before and after the production of the translated version of the stage performance. He also drew inspiration from Xu Yuanchong's theory of "three beauties", proposed the evaluation criteria of "semantic accuracy is the basis, beauty is the core; beauty of sound first, beauty of form second, beauty of meaning third", and established an evaluation criteria system of Chinese translated vocal music works that includes eight aspects. Compared with 10 years ago, the evaluation criteria proposed this time are more specific, more operational and more instructive in practice.

1.2.3 Active period: since 2009

Since 2009, many scholars have actively explored song translation activities, and the research atmosphere has been unprecedentedly active. In addition to the "rapid progress" in the number of research achievements mentioned above, the following two characteristics also existed in this period.

First, the research perspective is increasingly diversified. On the one hand, many scholars still have a strong preference for functionalist theory. Based on the three principles of teleology, Chen Pingping and He Gaoda proposed six standards for song translation, namely, "singing, listening, context, feeling, taste and meaning", which have been recognized by many peers. On the other hand, many scholars try to consider song translation activities from the new perspectives of translation variation theory, translation aesthetics, cultural studies, hermeneutics, semiotics, and communication. Among them, "The Three Talismans of Song Translation Change" is the first and currently the only song translator's doctoral dissertation. Yang Xiaojing, the author, regards songs as an organic whole composed of music, language and punctuation, and believes that the target of their translation is a typical inter symbol transformation activity. She combines the related concepts of semiotics and translation variation theory, distinguishes different levels of song translation research, discusses the methodology of full translation and variation, and provides a theoretical basis for the establishment of the methodology of song Chinese translation from multiple perspectives. This paper, for the first time, elevates the research object of song translation to the level of semiotics, which is refreshing.

Secondly, the translation of Chinese songs has begun to attract attention. In the hundred year history of song translation in China, the Chinese translation of foreign songs has always occupied the vast majority, and the translation orientation of translation research objects is also more in translation than in translation. However, as China's international status continues to rise, Chinese culture has become increasingly attractive to the outside world. In recent years, the translation and introduction of Chinese songs have gradually increased. Some scholars also began to turn to the study of the translation of Chinese songs. For example, when analyzing the English version of the National Anthem, Huang Junxiong summarized the guiding principles of "translating freely, ensuring rhythm, rhythm and singing ability, and striving for 'loyalty, excellence and beauty'"; Ji Yuhua and Liu Qinggang made a preliminary discussion on the English translation and singing skills of Chinese songs, and analyzed the problems encountered in the translation and the solutions.

It is particularly gratifying that songs with national characteristics, such as Northern Shaanxi folk songs and Shanxi folk songs, are increasingly going abroad and attracting the attention of many scholars. In 2009, Shaanxi Province launched the "Northern Shaanxi Folk Songs Translation and Introduction Project". At present, it has successfully held two Northern Shaanxi Folk Songs Translation and Introduction Academic Seminars, and has spawned many research achievements: Hou Bin has discussed the discipline orientation, historical status quo and translation strategies of folk song translation, Zhao Wangpei has analyzed the language characteristics of northern Shaanxi folk songs, elaborated the theoretical support and strategic skills of folk song translation, and Zhao Matao and Li Yan have based on Steiner's four steps of hermeneutics, This paper analyzes the voice of the translator's subjectivity in the translation of northern Shaanxi folk songs. Yang Yuhan, taking Pierce's semiotics as the theoretical framework, discusses the equivalence in the translation of northern Shaanxi folk songs. It can be said that the reason why song translation research suddenly became active in 2009 is closely related to the start of folk song English translation research to a large extent. Although most of the current research in this area is aimed at the translation of lyrics for reading and appreciation only, and less consideration is given to the singing side of the music, it is a good start.

2. Conclusion

To sum up, the study of song translation in China has gone through 80 years since the 1940s, and gradually rose from the summary of practical experience to the theoretical exploration with universal guiding significance, realizing a qualitative leap. The guiding role of translation theory should not be underestimated. Therefore, the practical activities of song translation are based on evidence, and their development will be more orderly. At present, the in-depth study of song translation is still the need of the development of the times and the construction of a complete translation system. It is hoped that on the basis of previous research results, academic colleagues will actively participate in this new field in the ascendant and continue this upsurge of exploration.

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