

Cultural Confidence in Cross-Cultural Communication from the Perspective of Family Resemblance Theory

A Brief Analysis of Cultural Facsimile and Distortion in the Translation of Northern Shaanxi Folk Songs

Rongxue Wang¹

¹ Xi'an Mingde Institute of Technology, Xi'an, Shaanxi, China

¹Corresponding author. Email:wangrx@mdit.edu.cn

ABSTRACT

Under the background of globalization, based on family resemblance theory, this paper takes the translation of folk songs in Northern Shaanxi as an example to discuss culture facsimile in the process of cross culture communication. And get the conclusion that the translation of folk songs in northern Shaanxi should be based on the principle of being responsible for the source language and culture. At the same time, give some suggestions about how to use appropriate translation form to help more people around the world to have a better understanding of Northern Shaanxi with the help of Shaanxi folk songs.

Keywords: *Culture confidence, Culture facsimile, Northern Shaanxi folk songs, Family resemblance theory.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Culture is not only the cornerstone of the national spirit but also an important index to measure the comprehensive strength of a country. With the development of globalization, countries are conducting in-depth exchanges and mutual influence in many fields. Issues related to the contact, collision and integration of cultures are increasingly emerging. In the current global cultural development, in the face of "cultural hegemony" and other problems, "cultural consciousness" and "cultural confidence" also become more and more important. Only by promoting the creative transformation of Chinese traditional culture and innovative development constantly in the process of international communication, can we truly enhance cultural soft power, cultural consciousness and cultural confidence of the nation and then enhance the international influence. Cultural confidence has become an era requirement for the nation. It is also an important way to improve the nation's cultural soft power. To achieve cultural confidence, the key is not to forget the traditional Chinese culture while

absorbing foreign culture. Only in this way, can we wishing for a better future.

The concept of "cultural consciousness" is to emphasize the "self-awareness" of one's own culture. It is important to understand the origin, formation process, characteristics and development trend of one's own culture; At the same time, independent ability plays a vital role in the process of cultural transformation. "Restoration" is not acceptable, nor does "total westernization" or "total otherization" (Fei Xiaotong, 1997).

Cultural confidence is an updated version of cultural awareness. Cultural confidence is the lasting force for the development of a country and a nation. Without a high degree of cultural confidence and cultural prosperity, there will be no great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

Shaanxi is an important birthplace of Chinese civilization. Original culture here played a positive role in the development of the Chinese nation and the world civilization in human history. Shaanxi regional culture, as an important part of Chinese regional culture, contains many important elements

needed for the building of confidence in Chinese national culture today. Cultural confidence of Shaanxi regional culture plays an important role in building cultural confidence of the whole Chinese nation in the process of external communication.

Northern Shaanxi folk songs not only carried bold, simple cultural spirit of Shaanxi province, but also inherited the gene of Chinese red revolutionary culture. Under the background of Belt and Road initiative, do a good job in northern Shaanxi folk song translation studies will be a great contribution in the field of cross-cultural communication. Literature and art works with strong local characteristics provide people from other countries opportunities to better understand Shaanxi culture. If handled properly, such kind of literature works will play a positive role in enhancing Chinese people's "cultural confidence".

2. CULTURAL CONFIDENCE AND CULTURAL FACSIMILE IN TRANSLATION

"Cultural self-consciousness" refers to people living in a certain cultural and historical circle who have self-knowledge of their culture and a full understanding of its development process. It is a viewpoint borrowed from sociologist Fei Xiaotong.

Cultural consciousness requires every individual to have a comprehensive understanding of the culture of his own nation. One needs to understand both the advantages and disadvantages of his own culture. The concept of "cultural consciousness" has triggered a wide range of scholars' reflections on translation issues. Zhu Zhenwu (2016:83) pointed out that in recent years, we tried to take the target language readers' acceptance habits and ways of thinking into consideration in cultural translation, but we seldom notice that the focus of our translation activities has already gone wrong. And to a large extent, we have lost our cultural consciousness. Cultural consciousness is reflected in the specific translation practice in the form of language. The level of the translator's cultural consciousness will directly affect his choice of translation strategy. It can be seen that without cultural awareness, cultural confidence cannot be achieved.

"Cultural confidence" is the sublimation and development of "cultural consciousness". It is a country or a nation's full affirmation of its own cultural value and firm belief in its own cultural vitality. "Cultural confidence" means that only by

loving one's own culture can one be confident with it. China does not lack of raw materials for external communication, but translators with profound cultural deposits. Not knowing too much about the history is the biggest stumbling block for most translators. Only by identifying with Chinese culture from the bottom of heart can the translated works have strong foundation.

Culture and translation are inextricably linked. Translation is not only the conversion between languages, but also the communication between different cultures. Language reflects the culture of a nation and carries rich cultural connotations, but it is also restricted by culture. As an important part of the culture, the languages of different countries embody different cultural connotations in the form of symbols. As an important bridge of cultural communication, the translation process needs to consider the differences between China and the western countries in ways of thinking, religious beliefs, social customs and cultures.

Cultural facsimile means that the target language should accurately reproduce the meaning, style and method conveyed by the source language from the cultural level. In other words, the content expressed in the original language can be reproduced in the target language as much as possible. With the deepening of globalization, the cultures of different countries and regions are inevitably influenced by the cultures of other parts of the world. Translation is a bridge for cultural communication and exchange. Appropriate translation processing methods can help target language readers better understand the culture of the source language.

Culture may inevitably carry the national characteristics and times features. Translation practice and academic research direction must be affected by the national development stage, development path and national cultural characteristics. Consequently, translation practice should be based on traditional Chinese culture. In translation, cultural confidence is reflected as an independent discourse system. Translators have the right to define distinctive national things and express thoughts and feelings in the target language. In the process of translation, if we are limited to foreign theories to explain Chinese stories, or we are only satisfied with putting Chinese culture into the framework of foreign culture, our culture will still be in a weak position and lose the significance of cultural communication. At the same time, we should also be deeply aware

that cultural confidence is based on cultural awareness, overconfidence will fall into cultural arrogance, excessive self-abasement is not conducive to the external communication of excellent traditional Chinese culture.

3. TRANSLATION PRINCIPLES OF NORTHERN SHAANXI FOLK SONGS UNDER THE THEORY OF FAMILY RESEMBLANCE

“All philosophy is a kind of language criticism” (Wittgenstein (2016:42). Therefore, translation can be regarded as a cross-cultural language activity. In recent years, many philosophers have taken translation as a way to obtain perceptual materials to clarify language and philosophical issues. Meanwhile, philosophical methodology also provides rational support for translation studies.

The concept of family resemblance refers to the concept of familial similarity, such as game, language, number, etc. Cultural imagery refers to words with different referents, meanings and cultural functions in the source and target cultures. Wittgenstein’s concept of language family provides a reasonable theoretical basis for its operability and accessibility -- a vast network of semantic concepts. The establishment of this semantic conceptual network is either influenced by the fixed representation of the cultural context, or restricted by the immediacy of the situational context. This semantic conceptual network maximizes the consistency between the interpreter and the related items, and then resolves the “source” language from the perspective of the listener.

The factors for assessing the translatability of cultural images from the perspective of family resemblance include: similarity of language and culture; similarity of life form and context; the relationship between the original work and the translation; and the intersubjectivity of the translator. Based on the case study of cultural imagery in poetry, we can see that the similarity between members of multi-cultural families is the premise of cross-cultural translation. In addition, the complex and diverse social and cultural factors are the difficulties of detailed quantitative analysis. Finally, family resemblance not only describes the multi-dimensional similarity phenomenon in translation studies, but also provides a dynamic and multivariate evaluation framework for measuring translatability. Proper understanding of these factors can help the translator do a better job in northern Shaanxi folk song translation.

3.1 Limits of Cultural Translatability in Northern Shaanxi Folk Songs

Song is a kind of art form combined with language and music, carrying a lot of cultural information. In history, song is the pioneer of cultural communication and cultural contact. As an important branch of Chinese folk songs, Northern Shaanxi folk songs are the most representative cultural elements in Northern Shaanxi. Northern Shaanxi folk songs are also the artistic portrayal of local working people’s emotions and lives in different social periods. Folk songs in northern Shaanxi are popular among the audience because of their simple language, rich content, strong local color, unique singing style and artistic characteristics. Like folk songs in other regions, they are closely related to the daily life of local people.

The widely sung folk songs in northern Shaanxi mainly include the following two themes: first, political themes. People in northern Shaanxi express their high praise to the Communist Party of China, the Chinese revolution and the great leader with their songs. Among them, the most representative ones include: The East Turns Red, Liu Zhidan, The Red Morningstar Lily is Full Blossom, Nanniwan, Thinking of Yan’an and so on. Second, love themes. Songs with the theme of love account for a large proportion of folk songs in northern Shaanxi. In old China, the love between young men and women was always damaged and destroyed by the feudal ethics. Songs became an important way for them to rebel against the feudal tradition and express their pure love. During the revolutionary period, young men and women integrated the revolutionary determination into the love songs, which gave a new meaning to the love songs. Through these songs, they expressed their revolutionary determination and courage to break through the feudal bondage at the expense of their own love and even their lives.

In order to realize the facsimile of culture in the translation of northern Shaanxi folk songs, the following factors should be considered: The first is the limit of cultural translatability. Cultural differences increase the difficulty of translation activities. As an important way for local people to express their feelings, northern Shaanxi folk songs contain unique folk culture of northern Shaanxi. The lyrics are all in the authentic northern Shaanxi dialect, which has strong local characteristics. It is these unique cultural factors that increase the difficulty of translation work, and also directly

affect the reproduction and external communication of the cultural beauty of northern Shaanxi folk songs.

The second is the translation of culture-loaded words. There are huge differences in living habits, ways of thinking, histories and religious beliefs among different countries, nations and regions in the world. These differences appear in different languages in the form of culture-loaded words, which is one of the important signs to show that a culture is different from other cultures. Many culture-loaded words are unique, and these culture-loaded words show the unique things of a nation in the most direct form. However, the same or similar expressions of culture-loaded words cannot be found in other cultures. Culture-loaded words appear in a large number of literary works. In the translation process of culture-loaded words, a variety of translation strategies should be integrated to achieve cultural facsimile.

The third is the translation of dialects. In many English-speaking countries, dialects are regarded as a symbol of social status, and the use of dialect may indicate that the speaker is less educated. In China, dialects are widely used by people in different regions and are not necessarily related to education level or social status. Different attitudes towards dialects also reflect cultural differences. In the process of translation, the most common way to deal with the source dialect is to find the corresponding dialect in the target language to ensure the fidelity of the translation to the source language. However, due to the existence of cultural differences, this processing method may lead to some misunderstandings of the target language readers.

Therefore, considering the characteristics of Northern Shaanxi folk songs comprehensively and based on the family resemblance theory, the cultural facsimile in English translation of northern Shaanxi folk songs should follow the following principles: 1) When the cultural image belongs to both the source culture and the target culture, the translatability degree is high. the corresponding translation strategies are as follows: target language expression referring to the source culture(using the shared image between the target language and the source language), transference + explanation(transferring the cultural imagery of the source language and explaining it), Neutral explanation(explaining it with vague words);2) When the cultural image is unique to the source culture and the translatability is low, corresponding

strategies can be adopted to improve the translatability: transference (transferring the cultural image of the source language to the target language), Transference + explicitation(transferring the cultural image of the source language and using the strategy of explicitation); 3) When the Cultural image is unique to the target culture, its translatability is low, the compensatory strategies are cultural substitution(replacing the source image with the cultural image of the target language) and Omission.(Fang Jing. 2017:97-98)

The cultural images in northern Shaanxi folk songs can be roughly divided into three categories: material culture, custom culture and conceptual culture. The following part will focus on problems of cultural facsimile and distortion in the translation of northern Shaanxi folk songs by referring to the translation strategy of cultural images under the theory of family resemblance theory.

3.2 *Translatability of Material Culture*

Material products are the most direct way for people to know and understand a culture. Material products include clothing, food, architecture, transportation, production tools and so on, which show cultural elements or cultural landscape in a specific way. Northern Shaanxi folk songs are the direct expression of people's life in northern Shaanxi, and the lyrics naturally contain rich and unique material culture. Such as:

羊肚子 (那个) 手巾包冰糖, 我的 (那个) 哥哥你好心肠。

Rock candy is wrapped in a towel like sheepskin,

And a shepherd like you has a sweet-heart within

热腾腾的油糕摆上桌, 滚滚的米酒捧给亲人喝。

Sweet fried cakes are served at the table,

And hot millet wine is poured into bowels.

白爽爽的被子热炕炕, 高粱老酒醉死人。

A clean quilt is ready in a warm kang bed,

A pot of sorghum wine is sweet for a drink.

一面面 (的个) 红旗间硷畔上插, 你把咱们的游击队引回咱家。

And red flags flying in the yards outside our caves,

And inside our cave houses we sit with our soldiers.

(Wang Hongyin 2009:88-89)

Material culture is the thing or knowledge concept created by a certain country or nation, and there is no corresponding thing in the country or nation of the target language. The difference will inevitably bring difficulties to cross-cultural communication and interlingual translation. In the above lyrics, “羊肚肚手巾”, “油糕”, “米酒”, “炕”, “硷畔” are typical clothing decoration, food and architectural things in northern Shaanxi culture, while there are no corresponding words in English culture. The expressions like “white towel”, “sweat cake”, “millet wine” and “kang bed” are only interpretive translations of the original words, which are not conducive to the communication between different cultures from a cross-cultural perspective.

3.3 *Translatability of Conceptual Culture*

Conceptual culture is the overall reflection of the ways and methods people in the same cultural system employed to see external things. There are world views towards nature and society as well.

In northern Shaanxi, the natural environment is relatively bad, working people who make living by farming need to fight against the natural conditions. Therefore, under the influence of Chinese traditional Taoist belief and Buddhist culture, there is no lack of prayer to the gods and Bodhisattvas in the lyrics of folk songs; Northern Shaanxi also has its own cultural activities such as Yangge dance, Wandering Chants, etc. In addition, northern Shaanxi also has its own unique folk songs, praising the great leader's reverence. These factors have caused the “cultural vacancy” in cross-cultural communication, so the translation of faithfulness, aptness, meaning and vividness of these translation points have caused great obstacles. Such as:

龙王老爷爷 (噢) 早下了, 西葫芦南瓜咋晒死了。

龙王老爷爷 (噢) 早下了, 早下海雨救万民。

King of Dragon, Please rain!

Pumpkin and cushaw go dry!

King of Dragon, Please rain!

Rain for the salvation of men!

二月里来龙抬头, 三哥哥走了一回西包头。

In the second month of the Lunar year,

You went as far west as to the Baotou city.

(Wang Hongyin 2009:91-93)

Due to different religious beliefs between China and the West, “Dragon King” is not a word unique to Chinese culture. In western culture, dragon is associated with “flame”, while in Chinese culture, “Dragon King” is the master of “ocean” and “rain”. Although the words and things are equivalent to each other, their connotations are quite different, which will also cause the confusion of the target language audience. And the unique culture of China cannot be transmitted. “龙抬头” is a custom in Chinese culture, so this image is omitted without translation.

3.4 *Translatability of Custom Culture*

Custom culture is a culture formed in People's Daily life based on national customs and habits, which to some extent reflects people's behavioral norms and social norms under a specific cultural background. Such as:

五月里来五端阳, 我和三哥哥拜花堂。

May celebrate the Dragon Boat Festival.

And you and I celebrate our wedding day.

拜罢花堂入洞房 (哎个哟呵), 咱二人情意长。

Then we enter our bridal chamber, my honey,

And enjoy our everlasting love of may.

哥哥正年轻, 妹妹像花初开; 收到这荷包带, 郎你要早回来。

My boy is just in his prime, and I am in my maiden bloom.

Please come back early, my love, when you get my love pouch.

(Wang Hongyin 2009:122-123)

“哥哥”, “妹妹”, “三哥哥” and “四妹妹” in folk songs of northern Shaanxi are the names of two young men and women who fall in love with each other. However, such kind of culture image does not exist in western countries. If they are literally translated into “brother and sister”, readers of the target language will surely be confused. “my boy” and “I” in the translation is a way to handle the culture difference, but this version cannot transmit the regional culture.

4. CONCLUSION

The northern Shaanxi folk songs contain a wide range of traditional folk culture, the purpose of translation is to let more people understand Chinese local culture and understand the life of the ordinary Chinese through the northern Shaanxi folk songs. Therefore, as the most important participants and policymakers in the translation process, the translator should not deliberately cater to the needs of the target language readers. Instead, the translator should adhere to the cultural consciousness and spread the traditional culture faithfully and confidently. Only in this way, can the Chinese traditional culture get promoted in the world multicultural system and then improve the world discourse power of Chinese culture.

As one of the most outstanding birthplaces of Chinese ancient civilization, Shaanxi should make good use of its own advantages and show the regional culture to the world. In order to achieve cultural confidence in the translation process of Shaanxi regional culture, the translators should shoulder the translation mission, take the dissemination of Chinese culture and Shaanxi regional culture as the most important responsibility, and promote Shaanxi regional culture to go out.

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