

# The Necessity of Integrating Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture into Translation Courses

## Taking Confucian Culture as an Example

Dan Yu<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Foreign Language School, Jilin Normal University, Siping, Jilin, China

### ABSTRACT

The integration of traditional Chinese culture into higher education translation courses embodies significance. Confucianism ideas enjoy a high reputation in Chinese education history. The traditional culture of Confucianism has stood firm in people's educational philosophy and national stability after years of vicissitudes. The education in the higher education stage plays a very important role in the future life of college students. Knowing more knowledge of traditional Chinese culture correctly plays a role in guiding and inspiring college students to have correct and good educational etiquette and morality, and helping them establish the confidence of Chinese culture.

**Keywords:** *Traditional Chinese culture, Confucian culture, Higher education, Translation.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION: THE SPREAD OF CONFUCIAN CULTURE

College students can strengthen their understanding of traditional Chinese culture by integrating profound and extensive traditional Chinese culture into translation courses, thus they can be proud of traditional Chinese culture. The courses in English major have been focused on language, culture and communication of English-speaking countries for the purpose of improving students' English capability, however, students are lack of knowing and learning traditional Chinese culture. The author wants to show that learning translation of traditional Chinese culture is very important for contemporary college education by sharing translation of some phrases and sentences on Confucian culture through the movie of "Confucius".

The traditional Confucian culture has a long history of spreading, foreign missionaries and foreign sinologists made contributions to the spreading of Confucian culture by translating the "The Analects of Confucius" and other related works. Nowadays, more ways are used to spread Confucian culture, for example, the establishment of Confucius Institutes, teaching Chinese as a

Foreign Language, lectures on Confucianism, translation of Confucian Books, tourism opening of Confucian Scenic Spots, and films relating to Confucius. However, there are still weaknesses during the spreading. In the movie of "Confucius", most of the subtitle translation is excellent, but some phrases and sentences are needed to be improved. For instance, some translation strategies for specific dynasty official positions need to be discussed; and some culture-loaded words in the movies are also needed to be promoted. The purpose of translation is to help audience understand movie story and roles' emotion, the audience can also know Confucian culture through the culture-loaded words.

The improvement of subtitle translation is an important step to spread the Confucian culture. Many words and expressions in the subtitle translation are adopted translation strategy of domestication which means using cultural ideas and value of target language to replace the cultural ideas and value of source language, particularly using simile, metaphor and national features of target language to replace the ones of source language. Although domestication can help target language audience understand the meaning of

source language, it loses features of traditional Chinese culture.

## 2. THE ANALYSIS OF TRANSLATION THROUGH MOVIE SUBTITLE

In the movie, there are many names and titles of the King and ministries, most of their translation are adopted domestication, like, Zhou Gong is translated into Duke of Zhou, Qijing Gong is translated into Duke Jing of Qi, target language audience can understand their position in the palace for duke is in the western culture, however, China's dynasties are different from those in western countries, thus the titles of ministries and their responsibilities are totally different, it is hard to be equal, and the translation is not saved traditional Chinese culture. Zhou Gong is the fourth son of King Wen of Zhou who has ambitious achievements. Confucius worships King Wen of Zhou, Confucius has been wanting to establish a country like West Zhou, promote Li in Zhou, but because of many reasons, he does not achieve the goals. Thus, it is recorded in "Shu'er of The Analects of Confucius" that Confucius says, "I am too old, I have not dreamed King Wen of Zhou for a long time." This sentence is implied that the etiquette (Li) culture has been lost, meanwhile, Confucius wants to express lamentation over his failure to achieve political ideals. The earliest duke in European countries was first occurred in Roman Empire period, those senior generals who protected the country border could receive the title of Duke. German tribe was influenced by Roma, all branches heads were local Grand Duke. Duke of the UK was occurred in 1337, the son of Edward III was the first Duke in the UK. Thus in the movie of "Confucius", Zhou Gong and Qijing Gong are translated into Duke, which can be understood by target language audience, but the accuracy needs to be further discussed. Gu Hongming adopts domestication when he translates "The Analects of Confucius", "甚矣吾衰也! 久矣吾不复梦见周公。" is translated into "How my mental powers have decayed! For a long time now I have not dreamt, as I won't to do, of our Lord of Chou." Gu uses "Lord of Chou" to translate "Zhou Gong", the translation is more accepted. It can be added, like, The Moses or Solon of Chinese history; The founder of Confucius' native State, Lu (the England of Ancient China), in this way, the translation not only explains Zhou Gong and Lu State, but also strengthens the understanding of translation as well as spreads Chinese characteristic culture. Therefore,

translators need to take Chinese culture into consideration when they translate, Chinese history is different from European countries, the titles of ministries cannot be totally equal, Gu translates Zhou Gong into Zhou Gong (Lord of Zhou), Qijing Gong into Qijing Gong (Duke Jing of Qi), he adopts domestication and foreignization, meanwhile, annotation is also adopted, this method can help audience understand source language meaning and know Chinese ancient titles.

In addition, there are some translation in the movie is confusing, for example, "大司寇" is translated into "Minister of Law", "鲁大夫" is translated into "Minister in the Court of Lu", "大将军" is translated into "Minister", these three titles and positions are different, thus they cannot be translated into minister. The responsibility of "大司寇" is to be in charge of criminal and prison litigation, while minister means a head or minister of a cabinet. In Wiktionary, "大司寇" is translated into a politician who heads a ministry (government department). "大司寇" and "鲁大夫" can be used minister, but it is better to use "general" to translate "大将军". Annotation can also be used here to translate "大司寇" into "Great Sikou (Minister of Law)", "鲁大夫" into "Dafu of Lu (Minister in the Court of Lu)". Foreignization plus annotation can be used to translate Chinese characteristic words and phrases so as to spread Chinese culture.

## 3. THE ANALYSIS OF CULTURE-LOADED WORDS THROUGH MOVIE SUBTITLE

There are many culture-loaded words in the movie in order to emphasize Confucius image and his ideas. For instance, "礼乐仁和", "仁者爱人", "路不拾遗", "夜不闭户", "安居乐业", "天下大同", "道不同不相为谋", "己所不欲, 勿施于人", "君子无戏言", "言必信, 行必果", "唯女子与小人难养也", "苟利国家生死以之", "朝问道夕死可矣", and "岁寒 然后知松柏之后凋也". Chinese ancient phrases and sentences represent traditional Chinese culture, generally, translating these phrases and sentences embody two steps, the first step is intralingual translation, and the second is interlingual translation. The author presents some translation of culture-loaded phrases and sentences in the movie in order to explore the translation methods of these ancient phrases and sentences.

Table 1. Culture-loaded Words Translation in the Movie

The source language phrases and sentences in the movie	Subtitle translation
礼乐仁和	ethics, music, humanity, harmony
礼乐仁义	rituals, music, benevolence and harmony
仁者爱人	true benevolence is the love of mankind
周礼	rituals of Zhou
以礼治国	civility in government
路不拾遗, 夜不闭户	Streets are safe, homes are secure
安居乐业, 天下大同	People will live well and work cheerfully, universal peace and harmony will reign.
见义勇为为无勇也	Helping others is a measure of bravery.
道不同不相为谋	Our roads are different.
己所不欲 勿施于人	He imposes on others what he will not impose on himself.
君子无戏言, 言必信, 行必果	A gentleman's word is golden.
唯女子与小人难养也	Women and servants are hard to raise.
苟利国家生死以之	Put your country ahead of your life.
朝问道夕死可矣	A man who wakes up living a life of civility will go to his death a justified.
岁寒 然后知松柏之后凋也	Only in winter does the pine tree show its true strength.

In the above culture-loaded phrases and sentences in “Table 1”, “礼” and “仁” share different translation in the subtitle translation of the movie. “礼” of “礼乐仁和” is translated into “ethics”, “仁” is translated into “humanity”; “礼” of “礼乐仁义” is translated into “rituals”, “仁” is translated into “benevolence”, “礼” of “以礼治国” is translated into “civility” (seen in “Table 1”). Translators such as James Legge, Willie, An Lezhe, Liu Dianjue, Gu Hongming, Xu Yuanchong, Wu Guozhen, Lin Yutang, and others have successively translated “The Analects of Confucius”, they study the understanding of Li, Ren, Dao and Xiao in Confucianism, they explore and research them from the perspectives of philosophical significance, cultural significance, functional linguistics theory, tenor, corpus research methods, qualitative and quantitative research methods, cultural translation perspectives, image discourse analysis, empirical research, textual research, invention research, and comparative research between China and the West.

James Legge translates “仁” into “true virtue” or “perfect virtue”, Willie translates it into “the Good” and “Goodness”. Gu Hongming translates it into “moral life” or “moral character”. Lin Yutang translates it into true manhood”. Moreover there are other translations, like “love”, “kindness”, “charity”, “generosity”, “altruism”, “character”,

“compassion”, “magnanimity”, “true mankind”, “human-heartedness”, and “authoritative conduct”. Different translators have different understanding of “仁”, James Legge is a missionary for spreading his religious faith, thus he uses domestication translation strategy and lot of western words, in order to help target language readers understand the meaning of source language. The most obvious feature of his translation is to use western words to translate Chinese characters, and uses Jesus words to translate Confucius phrases. Willie adheres to the principle of “one period, one Confucius”, he begins with the meaning of “仁”, translates it into “virtue” and “kindness”. “Virtue” means the quality of doing what is right and avoiding what is wrong, it focuses more on moral, and “kindness” means the quality of being warmhearted and considerate and humane and sympathetic, tendency to be kind and forgiving, it focuses more on Confucius’s meaning. “礼” in the movie is translated into “ethics”, “rituals” and “civility”, James Legge translates it into “propriety”, Liu Dianjue translates it into “rites”, Willie translates it into “ritual”, Gu Hongming translates it into “decency”, An Lezhe translates it into “ritual propriety”. “Rites” and “ritual” are religious factors, “ethics” means motivation based on ideas of right and wrong, “decency” means the quality of conforming to standards of propriety and morality, from the

perspective of foreignization, “ethics” and “decency” can more express Confucius’s meaning.

Maybe because subtitle translation needs to be fit the role’s sentences, some of culture-loaded words are excessively oral and simple, for example, “君子无戏言, 言必信, 行必果” is translated into “A gentleman’s word is golden”. “道不同不相为谋” is translated into “Our roads are different”(seen in “Table 1”), it is better to take implied culture into account. “道不同不相为谋” can be translated into “persons who walk different paths cannot make plans together”. “道” is translated into “path”. “道” occurs many times in Confucius’s sentences, for example, “朝问道夕死可矣” which is also in the movie, and it is translated into “a man who wakes up living a life of civility will go to his death a justified”(seen in “Table 1”). Willie translates it into “If at dawn you learn of and tread the way, you can face death at dusk”. “道” is translated into “way”. The author searches for “道” in the Standardized Translation Terminology Database for Chinese Characteristic Discourse, and finds that “path” is 20%, “way” is 40%. In other situations, translators omit “道” in the translation process. Both of them can retain the meaning of “道” in Chinese culture.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Foreignization and annotation can save characteristics of traditional Chinese culture and historical culture, help target language audience understand the source language meaning. Domestication also has its own advantages. The translators need to adopt proper translation strategies to help target language readers and audiences understand the source language meaning and its traditional culture. Traditional Chinese culture is profound and extensive, it is worthwhile to be spread through different channels. Spreading traditional Chinese culture is also the responsibility of Chinese college students. Therefore, the integration of traditional Chinese culture into higher education translation course is significant and necessary, students can improve their translation ability and be confident in Chinese culture.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This article is the result of the General Project of the Social Science Research Project of the Jilin Provincial Department of Education, "Research on Approaches of Integrating Traditional Chinese

Culture into Translation Teaching in Universities" (No. JJKH20220421SK) .

#### REFERENCES

- [1] Ames, R.T. & Rosemont, H Trans. The Analects of Confucians: A Philosophical Translation. New York, Ballantine, 1998.
- [2] An Lezhe. "Philosophical Interpretation of the Analects". China Social Science Press, 2003 edition.
- [3] Gu Huijuan. The English Translation of "The Analects" and the "Going Global" of Chinese Culture. Publishing and Distribution Research, 2019 Edition.
- [4] Gun Chunsong. Confucianism and Chinese Aesthetics: An Orientation to Moral Education. Confucian Academy, 2021.
- [5] Jing Haifeng. The Inner Meaning of Cultural Confidence from the Perspective of Confucianism. Kong Xuetang, 2017 Edition.
- [6] Wu Zhen. On Confucian Rites and Music Civilization and Cultural Confidence. Kong Xuetang, 2017 Edition.
- [7] Wei Li. "The Analects". Hunan Renming Publishing House, 1999 edition.