

A study on the translation of Peking Opera terminology from the perspective of communicative translation theory

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Abstract: With China becoming more and more international, Chinese traditional culture is also known by the world. Peking Opera is a treasure of Chinese traditional culture, and the development involves translation which can help the spread of Peking Opera. Based on Newmark's communicative translation theory, this article discusses the Chinese-English translation of Peking Opera terminology. When translating Peking Opera terminology, it is necessary to consider many aspects of language communication. This article analyzes the translation strategies of functional terminology and culture-loaded words in Peking Opera terminology, including literal translation, additional translation, interpretation and transliteration, providing reference for the translation of Peking Opera terminology and contribute to the international communication of Peking Opera.

Keywords: communicative translation theory; Peking Opera terminology; culture difference; translation strategies

1. Introduction

As the national treasure of China, Peking Opera has the reputation of "Flower of Oriental Art", and has great representation and influence in the field of opera. Peking Opera translation plays a crucial role in the foreign dissemination of Peking Opera, and Peking Opera terminology, as one of the components of the translation of Chinese cultural texts, is a difficult and challenging part of translation. Some terms have multiple interpretations and meanings and are also unfamiliar to Chinese people. In order to enable foreigners to better understand the connotation and essence of Peking Opera, accurate translation methods and translation strategies for Peking Opera terminology are the difficulties and challenges faced by scholars.

Translation is a complex process that involves more than just translating from one language to another. Translation of terminology requires careful consideration of multiple aspects of linguistic communication, including pragmatics, context, cultural background, linguistic function and meaning. This paper will explore the Chinese-English translation strategies of Peking Opera terms from the perspective of the communication theory proposed by Newmark, aiming to further explore the difficulties in decoding and translating Peking Opera terms and to point out effective translation techniques.

2. Theoretical foundations

2.1. Newmark's Theory of Communication

Newmark's theory of communication holds that linguistic communication is a kind of social behavior, which not only includes the transmission of information, but also involves a variety of elements such as communication, interaction, understanding and creation of meaning. He believes that language is not only a symbolic expression of meaning, but also a tool for social communication. So translation needs to take these factors into account in order to accurately understand the meaning and expression of the original text (Peter Newmark, 2006). In communicative translation, the translator should try to make the effect of the target text as close as possible to that of the source text. As more attention is paid to the effect rather than the content, it is important to make sure that the source language source text is in line with the target language and culture and is easy to be understood by the readers. (Yang Li, 2008).

2.2. Terminology

Terminology is the study of terminology in specialized fields, which involves many facets of language, profession and culture. The initial study of terminology focuses on terms and their characteristics, terminology and its objects of study. "General terminology studies the

formation and use of specialized words while revealing the common characteristics of all specialized terms. The conceptual system of terminology is completely based on the principles and methods of knowledge ontology and in-depth understanding of the concept of terminology. Therefore, the translation of terminology needs to pay attention to various factors such as professional context, cultural background, language habits and the needs of the target readers of the translation.

Terminology plays a great role in the establishment and improvement of the terminology system of disciplines. With the development of science and technology and the cross-fertilization of disciplines, terminology is also constantly updated and developed. Translators should constantly enrich their knowledge and master the progress of knowledge and new concepts in related fields. Apply the theory of terminology in practice, consider the context in translation, ensure the accuracy and consistency of translation, and conform to terminology normalization and standardization.

3. Linguistic Characteristics of Peking Opera Terminology

Peking Opera terminology, on the other hand, is a form of linguistic symbols characterizing concepts specific to the field of Peking Opera (Yin Jian and Yu Wenqing, 2019). It is a unique linguistic symbol and special discourse system in Peking Opera with many unique features, and is undoubtedly an important part of the group layer of Chinese Peking Opera. The naming of Peking Opera terms is closely related to the performance forms and characteristics of Peking Opera. There are many categories of Peking Opera terminology, each of which has a deep meaning and form of expression. These words can reflect the regional characteristics and cultural background of Peking Opera, and enhance the power of expression.

Peking Opera is one of the traditional Chinese opera genres with rich cultural background and historical accumulation. Therefore, the translation of Peking Opera terminology also needs to take into account the influence of cultural background. As a traditional Chinese cultural art, Peking Opera has Chinese cultural characteristics in its performance style, plot content and character features. Therefore, Peking Opera terminology represents its own cultural characteristics, and when translated, it needs to indicate its cultural background and connotation so that foreign readers can better understand its meaning and importance.

4. Translation Strategies for Peking Opera Terminology

“Terminology translation is different from general text-based translation, in which the limitation of symbolic space for linguistic form transformation and the cultural divide for conceptual meaning regeneration often coexist (Wei Xiangqing, 2018).” Peking Opera has a unique form of performance, and Peking Opera performance is an art discipline that integrates literature, music and performance, so translators should also take this unique artistic style and characteristics into full consideration when translating. In the process of foreign dissemination, opera terminology often faces the problems of its own difficulty, inconsistent interpretation, biased translation and lack of talents. Therefore, it is important to improve the cultural literacy and terminological awareness of translators, adhere to correct translation principles in foreign communication, and summarize specific translation strategies and methods for the inheritance and dissemination of Peking Opera culture.

4.1. Translation of Performance Function Words in Peking Opera Terminology

Performance function words refer to the words used to describe the forms and characteristics of performances in Peking Opera. The most basic performance function words include “念白”、“唱腔”, which describe the language, music and other elements of Peking Opera performances. They describe the sound effects, movements, make-up and stage elements of Peking Opera performances.

These performance function terms carry the performance characteristics and styles of the Peking Opera art form, and also reflect the historical and cultural background of Peking Opera performances.

4.1.1 Translation of terminology for performance role categories

(1) “小生”: In Peking Opera, “小生” usually plays the role of young, handsome, loyal, brave, etc. When describing in English, directly translating “小生” as “young male” can convey his age and gender, while adding “role” indicates that it is a dramatic role. When describing the character in English, “young male” can convey his age and gender.

(2) “花旦”: It is a young female role in Peking Opera, which is often graceful, elegant and refined. Translating it as “young female

role” directly conveys the gender and age of the character, while emphasizing its role attributes in the drama.

The above two terms are precisely the use of “augmentation translation” in “meaning translation”, which translates the implied meanings additionally, with the intention of giving full play to the communicative function of language and conveying the meanings and connotations of the words themselves. From the perspective of communicative translation, it is conducive to the understanding of English readers.

4.1.2 Translation of phonetic terminology

(1) “唱腔 ”: Singing style in Peking Opera is an important means of expressing emotions and characterization of the characters, and it usually uses specific musical rhythms and tones. Translated as “vocal style”, it can convey the characteristics of its musical expression and fully achieve the communicative effect.

2) “五音调式 ”: Its musical expression has a unique status in Chinese culture. Using the strategy of communicative translation, translating it as “five-tone scale” can convey its musical nature

In a word, the translation of Peking Opera terminology needs to be carried out according to its specific context and characteristics, so as to convey its meaning and characteristics as accurately as possible. Translation usually needs to use some expressions and terms to convey the meaning in the original text, but it should also be careful not to lose the cultural connotations and special features in the original text.

5. Conclusion

Newmark’s communicative translation theory provides a new theoretical perspective for interpreting the current translation status of Peking Opera terminology. Translating Peking Opera terminology involves many aspects such as language, culture and art, etc. Taking Wang Rongpei’s and Xu Yuanchong’s translations as an example, this paper elaborates on the importance of translating Peking Opera terminology not only in consideration of its unique performance form and cultural background, but also in preserving the linguistic features and characteristics of the original text, and discusses its translation strategies. When translating Peking Opera terminology, different translation strategies, such as direct translation, annotation, and augmentation, are utilized in order to better convey its meanings and characteristics. At the same time, it is necessary to constantly strengthen the research and understanding of Peking Opera terminology and culture in order to better promote and pass on traditional Chinese culture and art.

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