

# Study on the Translation Strategy of Song Poetry from the Perspective of Cultural Linguistics

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**Abstract:** Cultural linguistics, as an emerging theoretical discipline of language research, is of great practical guiding value in translation practice. This paper studies the translation strategies of Song poetry from the perspective of cultural linguistics. Through the analysis of the famous Song poetry reflections on the Ancient Red Cliff--To the tune of Niannujiao, the author studies the universality of translation from general principles to case studies.

## 1. Concept Definition

### 1.1 Cultural Linguistics

The so-called cultural linguistics, based on linguists' thinking on the relationship between language and culture, studies the cultural factors contained in language on the basis of language form and maintains the development of culture and content in the research. In the theory of cultural linguistics, the focus of language study lies in culture, and no language study can exist without culture.

Cultural linguistics theory is proposed by the linguist Palmer, whose theoretical basis is the teaching with cultural anthropology, connecting language with human culture, establishes the status of culture in language system, and the research of relationship between language and culture, attaches great importance to the role of language in its collaboration with human. Elwood believes that language is the media of human psychological activity, and of all kinds of culture medium in the world.

The academic circle has fully realized that any language research is inseparable from the cultural background. Therefore, from the perspective of cultural linguistics, effective translation studies based on the dual analysis of culture and language are of great linguistic and practical significance.

### 1.2 The Translation of Song Poetry

Song Poetry is a popular genre of Han national literature in the Song Dynasty. In its development, it benefits from the special background of the Song Dynasty and the great masters of cultural literacy. Song Poetry plays an important role in ancient Chinese literature, so important that it is inevitable to discuss it in any literary research and literary history research.

The translation of Song Poems presents the main contents, main ideas, language forms, main features and other aspects of the article in another language by means of language form, translation skills and translation means. Its translation is a great challenge to translators. The verve and connotation of Song Poems cannot be translated too directly. Obviously, they are also difficulties in translation. The author will make a thorough analysis of the difficulties in its translation from the perspective of cultural linguistics.

### 1.3 Reflections on the Ancient Red Cliff--To the tune of Niannujiao

Reflections on the Ancient Red Cliff--To the tune of Niannujiao is written by Su Shi, a famous poet in song dynasty. Su Shi occupies an important position in the development of Song Poems, which not only depends on his writing a large number of well-known excellent works, but also because of his creation proposition of taking poems and literature as Ci poetry. After Su Shi, the creation of ci poetry has gradually shifted from the conservatism school to the liberal school. The

development of Ci poetry in Song Dynasty was more comprehensive and full of charm.

As the representative of Su Shi' works, Reflections on the Ancient Red Cliff--To the tune of Niannujiao satirizes the present by the ancient, and persuades the present by the ancient. With only a few sentences, it presents the turbulent history and feelings of poets in a great deal of details. Its contents are as follows:

The Great River flows,  
Eastward waves sweeping away,  
For thousands of years, gallant heroes.  
West of the ancient fort, they say, stands  
The Red Cliff of the Three-Kingdoms' Duke Zhou.  
Rocks pierce the sky, shore-tearing  
Waves swirl into piles of snow.  
What a glorious sweep of land,  
Once a stage for so many a hero!  
My thoughts drift to those years when Zhou  
Had newly married the beautiful Qiao,  
Vigour and valour aglow.  
A feather fan and a silken hat,  
He masterminded the fire-attack on the foe--  
Over a casual chat  
To see their fleet perish, blow by blow.  
Back from my mental vagrancy in that bygone age,  
I must laugh at myself: letting sentiments grow  
Into grey hairs, too soon.  
But isn't life a dream, after all?  
Let me pledge this cup to the River,  
To the Moon.

It is a powerful and an excellent representative of Song Poetry. Taking it as the research object is conducive to the development from paradigm to universal significance.

## **2. The Linguistics features and Present Development of Song Poetry's Translation**

### **2.1 Its Linguistics Features**

First, the formal characteristics of Song Poems is called long and short sentences mainly because its sentence forms vary in length. Song Poetry having a variety of forms, according to the number of words, can be roughly divided into three categories, Xiao Ling, middle tone, long tone. Song Poetry can be divided into four categories according to its tone: monotone, double tone, triple tone and quadruple tone.

Second, the linguistic characteristics. Song Poetry, like other poetry genres in China, has rhyme. The language of Song Poetry is similar to music, combining with music to form its tune names. As for Song Poetry, there is a special appellation--Ci Pai, the names of the tunes to which Ci poems are composed. There are more than 800 kinds of Ci Pai in Song Poetry, among which there are more than 100 common ones. In addition, the treatment of rhyming in song poetry is not as strict as that in tang poetry. Generally speaking, rhyming in single sentences is not strict, while rhyming in double sentences is relatively strict.

Third, its image characteristics. Song ci, like poetry, has many unique images.

### **2.2 The Present Development of Song Poetry's Translation**

At present, many linguists and language translators have paid attention to the field of ancient poetry translation, with abundant translation achievements and gradually accumulated translation works, forming a certain theoretical and documentary basis. However, there are still some problems in the study of song ci translation. Based on the current development of translation, the author

thinks about the current situation of Song Poetry translation research as follows:

First of all, the theoretical system is rich. After the 21st century, the theory of English translation of ancient Chinese poetry has been gradually developed, and the research tends to be systematic, comprehensive and diversified.

Secondly, the aesthetic presentation of poetry is emphasized in translation. The translation of ancient poetry in China, from the original form of translation to the present stage of the focus on aesthetic thoughts in translation, has experienced 30 years of translation practice.

Third, the study of ancient poetry at this stage has limitations. Both translation studies and translation itself still have limitations. Therefore, it is urgent for the translation circle in China to solve this problem and make use of multiple disciplines and knowledge systems to jointly promote the development of translation theories and methods.

Finally, there are not so many poems in China at present, in terms of the translation of song lyrics in particular, who can really do the translation work according to the facts. At present, our first concern should be to successfully present the romantic charm through the translation of content and form.

### **3. The Discussion of the Translation Strategies of Song Poetry from the Perspective of Cultural Linguistics**

Taking *Reflections on the Ancient Red Cliff--To the tune of Niannujiao* as an example, this paper discusses the translation strategies of Song Poetry from the perspective of cultural linguistics. In the development process of translating ancient Chinese poems in our country, as the translation foothold and the guiding ideology of cultural linguistics, there are four representative translation versions by Xu Zhongjie, Yan Xianyi, Xu Yuanzhong, and Zhu Chunshen. This article will make an analysis from the four aspects, to effectively explore an important topic in Chinese poetry translation.

#### **3.1 The Tone—setting of the Translation**

*Reflections on the Ancient Red Cliff--To the tune of Niannujiao* takes reminiscence of ancient times as the keynote of the creation. But it has not fallen into the old, sad autumn routine. On the contrary, it uncharacteristically creates a grand and vast style of Song Ci and a magnificent scene, which not only praises the heroes who made great achievements in The Three Kingdoms period, but also expresses its own great political ambition. It expresses the heroic spirit that the author can hardly conceal even on the way to demotion.

Therefore, if we want to translate *Reflections on the Ancient Red Cliff--To the tune of Niannujiao*, we should first add a grand vastness of inspirations into the tone of the translated works. Using the translation of the temperament of this poem, it shows the deep and broad momentum, heroic and powerful emotions and magnificent and beautiful scenery that the original words are intended to express. In the translation, it mainly reflects the bold and unrestrained style and fully presents its artistic charm.

#### **3.2 Highlighting Important Images**

At the beginning, the image of "the great river" is used to present readers with magnificent scenery and momentum. In the words "Da He", obviously, the attribute "Da", as an adjective, plays a descriptive role. In order to highlight this important image, Xu Zhongjie translates it relatively plainly into "this river", Yang Xianyi "mighty river", Xu Yuanzhong "endless river" and Zhu Chunshen "great river". The author believes that Xu Yuanzhong's translation of "endless river" not only highlights the size of the river, but also reflects the endless water. Although the translation versions by the other three translators are appropriate, it is obvious that "endless river" can better express the emotional connotation of *Sushi* and arouse readers' imagination.

"Romantic figures of the past" mainly refer to the heroes who were all-powerful in the Three Kingdoms Period, which are differently translated by the four translators. Xu's version is "men with victory crowned", Yang's "the heroes of the time past", Xu's "Gallant heroes of bygone years", and

Zhu's version "For thousands of years, the Gallant heroes". Besides Xu's slightly gentle version, the other three translations all translate "Romantic figures of the past" into "heroes", which promotes the formation of readers' image thinking and also has certain cultural implications. Therefore, in the process of translating ancient poetry, it is necessary to pay full attention to the connotations and images of the works, which should be finishing touch, to promote the qualitative leap of the translated works.

### 3.3 Focusing on the Creation of Artistic Conception of Translated Works

After determining the emotional tone and important images, what translators should do is have a good understanding of the translated work at all times, firmly creating artistic conception, which is expressed through the cultural connotation and the magnificent scene.

In order to highlight the artistic conception, the four translators' translations are as follows:

From the perspective of implication, Xu not only translated the image, but also further enriched the original intention and increased the common interpretation of multiple images. From the perspective of cultural language, his translation is of progressive significance: "High into the air, rocks, shapeless, jagged, soar execution. The Frightful turbulent waves crash the craggy shore - With to impact on the rocks, they more throw - That terms appears as a thousand heaps of snow."; Yang xianyi describes and analyzes each image concisely, with his translation "Here jagged boulders pound the clouds, Huge waves tear Banks apart, And foam piles up a thousands drifts of snow."; In addition, Xu Yuanchong, a translator, takes advantage of six obvious intentions to make clear translations:

"Jagged rocks tower in the air, Swashing waves beat on the shore, Rolling up a thousand heaps of snow." Zhu Chunshen: "Rocks Pierce the sky, shore-tearing Waves swirl into piles of snow." Personally, Zhu's translation, is not only short and concise, but also contains all necessary images, which is easy to understand, and promotes the refinement of the translation.

### 3.4 Seeking Cultural Identity

Reflections on the Ancient Red Cliff--To the tune of Niannujiao can be divided into two parts, the first part describing sceneries and the second part expressing emotions. The author's meticulous description of Zhou Gongjin's heroic young spirit presents a hero image in the author's mind. At the same time, Zhou Yu's success was compared with his own failure. The author makes use of the phrase "Over a casual chat, to see their fleet perish, blow by blow." to express the conflict and contrast. Using this sentence, the author brings out the punchline of the whole poetry: "But isn't life a dream, after all? Let me pledge this cup to the River, To the Moon." It is not only a metaphor for Zhou's sad ending, but also a description of the author's feelings of exclamation. Despite his life in the frustrating period, the author did not blindly sigh and self-pity, but expressed his emotions through drinking wine. From this point of view, Xu Yuanchong's translation is exactly precise, showing the elegance of the author's drinking to the moon and river: "Life is but like a passing dream, I'd drink to the moon which once saw them on the stream."

## 4. Conclusion

This paper takes the definition clarification of relevant concepts involved in the research as the starting point for analysis, based on the basic theoretical system, conducts a comprehensive analysis of the linguistic characteristics and translation status of Song Poetry, from which we can identify the main problems in the study of ancient poetry in China. In the end, the research will be aimed at -- taking Reflections on the Ancient Red Cliff--To the tune of Niannujiao as an example, and considering the translation strategies of Song Poetry from the perspective of cultural linguistics. Through the analysis, the following points should be paid attention to: first, set the tone of the poetry translation; Secondly, highlight the important images; Third, pay attention to the creation of artistic conception of translated works; Fourth, seek cultural identity. The author gives examples of the translations of Xu Zhongjie, Yang Xianyi, Xu Yuanchong and Zhu Chunshen. It is hoped that the author's research can effectively promote the translation study of Chinese ancient poetry.

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