

Research on English Translation of Shaanxi Folk Songs under the Perspective of Translation Aesthetics



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Abstracts: Shanbei folk song, an art form full of flavor and emotion, carries the deep historical and cultural heritage of the Shanbei region. It is not only a form of music, but also a kind of emotional communication, a kind of cultural communication. Songs are emotional bridges across cultures and languages, and through translation, the emotions and life experiences of the people of northern Shaanxi can be shared with people all over the world. By translating northern Shaanxi folk songs into English, more people can understand and appreciate this unique art form, thus better spreading traditional Chinese culture. However, when translators try to translate them into English, many difficulties and challenges follow, such as language barriers and cultural differences. Therefore, how to correctly deal with the challenges and accomplish high-quality translation is the key concern of every translator. Based on this, this paper elaborates on the specific path of English translation of Shaanxi folk songs from the perspective of translation aesthetics.

Keywords: translation aesthetics perspective; Shaanxi folk songs; English translation research

Introduction

In the context of globalization, cultural exchanges have become an important link between different peoples and countries. Art, especially music, often becomes the most intuitive and acceptable carrier of cultural exchange. Shaanxi folk songs, an art form full of regional characteristics and cultural connotations, are an important window to showcase traditional Chinese culture. Shaanxi folk songs carry rich regional characteristics, but the emotions reflected behind them - attachment to home, yearning for life, reverence for nature, etc. - are universal emotions, which enable foreign readers to find emotional resonance in them as well. Translation aesthetics not only pays attention to the fidelity of the text, but also emphasizes the in-depth excavation of the aesthetic value and cultural depth of the original text and precise communication in the process of translation, and the English-translated Shaanbei folk songs are also able to show their unique charm on the

international stage.

1. The Basic Theory of Translation Aesthetics

1.1 Definition and origin of translation aesthetics

As a discipline that studies the relationship between translation and aesthetics, translation aesthetics is concerned with how to evaluate, analyze, and guide translation activities through an aesthetic perspective. It emphasizes not only the traditional sense of "fidelity" or "transparency", but also the aesthetic charm and artistic value of translation (Luo & Wang, 2019). The aesthetics of translation originated in the middle of the 20th century, influenced by literary translation and comparative literature studies, and is particularly important for the translation of poetry, novels, and plays. Over time, the field has gradually expanded to other types of texts and cross-cultural communication.

1.2 Aesthetic and creative nature of translation

The aesthetics of translation refers to the beauty of the translated text in the target language, which

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involves the sound, rhythm, mood, and emotion of the language, and requires the translator to be not only a language converter but also a creator, who can retain the meaning of the original text while giving the target text a unique charm. Especially in the translation of poems and songs, it is a big challenge to transform the phonetic characteristics of the original text into the target language's phonetics while maintaining the rhythm (Tang, 2022). Context cannot be directly described by language, and it relies more on the reader's association. In translation, the translator needs to creatively reproduce the mood of the original text or create a new mood for the target readers. The emotion behind the words is a key factor in cross-cultural communication. Translators need to be sensitive to capture the emotion of the original text and ensure that it is accurately and deeply conveyed in the target text. Creativity is an indispensable part of the translation process. The translator is not only restating the original text, but also creating a new text for the target readers, so he or she needs to have good linguistic skills, in-depth knowledge of the original text and the target culture, as well as excellent aesthetic judgment.

2. Characteristics and Translation Value of Shaanxi Folk Songs

2.1 Language style and rhetoric

Northern Shaanxi folk songs have a unique language style, which is concise, simple, and directly expresses emotions and life experiences. This style is largely influenced by the natural environment, historical background, and people's way of life in northern Shaanxi. Northern Shaanxi folk songs are full of descriptions of local scenery, customs, and daily life, such as the high slopes of loess, plum blossoms, and sheep. Commonly used rhetorical techniques include simile, prose, repetition, etc., all of which can enhance the infectious and expressive power of the songs.

2.2 Emotional expression and cultural connotation

Shaanxi folk songs are a direct reflection of the people's emotions, and what is described in the lyrics is their real life and real emotions. These songs

largely contain the cultural memories and historical experiences of northern Shaanxi. Whether describing love, family, farming, or other topics, the folk songs of northern Shaanxi are the real flow of emotions, without too much modification and carving, and these songs are not only the surface of the emotional flow, but also the inheritance and promotion of the history, culture, traditions and values of northern Shaanxi.

2.3 Musicality and rhythm

The musicality of northern Shaanxi folk songs is strong, with distinctive local characteristics, such as the melody is usually simple, easy to remember, but full of changes, and the lyrics of the emotion are closely integrated. Northern Shaanxi folk songs have a strong sense of rhythm, often combined with local dances, rituals, and customs, such as waist drums and group dances in northern Shaanxi. Northern Shaanxi folk songs are sung in a primitive, rugged style that fully expresses the character traits and attitudes of people in northern Shaanxi. Northern Shaanxi folk songs are a reflection of the unique culture, history, and lifestyle of northern Shaanxi, with distinctive local characteristics, deep cultural connotations, and strong musicality, and they are a bright pearl among Chinese folk songs (Liu & Zhou, 2022).

2.4 The significance of English translation of northern Shaanxi folk songs

Northern Shaanxi folk song is not only the representative of northern Shaanxi, but also the epitome of China's profound history and culture. It reflects the state of life in rural areas of China, the emotions and aspirations of the people, and their relationship with nature. With the renewed interest in national culture in recent years, Shaanxi folk songs have been introduced into various international music festivals and art programs, becoming an important form of showcasing the charm of Chinese music. In musicology, folklore, and cultural studies around the world, northern Shaanxi folk songs have also taken their place and are regarded as an important source for the study of traditional Chinese culture. Through English translations of Shaanxi folk songs, foreign readers can have a more intuitive understanding of

Chinese rural life, people's emotional world, and traditional cultural values. For foreign readers who are not familiar with Chinese culture, through the English-translated Shaanbei folk songs, they can understand and feel the folk culture and historical background of China more directly, and deepen their understanding and love of China. The universal emotions and philosophies of life in Shaanxi folk songs, such as love, family, labor, and nature, are all resonable with international audiences. English-translated folk songs make these emotions more intuitive and easy to understand, building emotional bridges for people of different cultural backgrounds. The rhyme, rhythm, and rhetorical beauty of Shaanxi folk songs make them a unique breed of art. For foreign readers who are interested in music and art, this is undoubtedly a new and worthwhile field to explore. It can be said that English-translated Shaanxi folk songs have become a bridge connecting Chinese culture with other cultures in the world, promoting mutual understanding and respect among the international community, and facilitating the deepening of cross-cultural exchanges.

3. Translation Strategies in English Translation of Shaanxi Folk Songs

3.1 The choice of direct translation and Italian translation

When translating Shaanxi folk songs, direct translation and Italian translation are commonly used translation strategies, which the translator needs to choose reasonably based on the specific content of the song, the target audience, and the purpose of the translation. When the words or phrases in the lyrics are culturally and contextually neutral, direct translation can be used to ensure the authenticity and integrity of the original text. For content that is deeply influenced by culture or may lead to misunderstanding, Italian translation is a better choice to ensure that the emotion, mood, and cultural background of the song are properly conveyed.

3.2 Conveyance of cultural connotation

Shaanxi folk songs are full of rich cultural

connotations. In English translation, how to effectively convey these connotations needs the translator's focused attention. For some specific cultural terms or background knowledge, the use of notes or footnotes is an effective way to enable the target audience to better understand. In some cases, elements or concepts in the target culture that are similar to those in the original text can be searched for to achieve cultural equivalence. For cultural elements that are difficult to translate directly, translators need to make certain cultural adaptations to make them closer to the target audience's perceptions (Han, 2021).

3.3 Trade-off between preservation and innovation

When translating Shaanxi folk songs, preserving the authenticity of the original text and innovating for the target audience are both very important. Translators should strive to preserve the original style, rhythm, and emotion of the songs to ensure that their uniqueness is not lost. In some cases, some degree of innovation, such as modifying the melody, adjusting the rhythm, or adding new elements, is necessary to make the song more appealing to the target culture. English translation of Shaanxi folk songs is a complex but challenging task. Choosing appropriate translation strategies and weighing the preservation and innovation of the original text are all aimed at better presenting the charm and deep meaning of Shaanxi folk songs in the target culture.

4. The Beauty of English Translation of Northern Shaanxi Folk Songs from the Perspective of Translation Aesthetics

4.1 "Green Flower Cloth"-analysis of the beauty of dialect and liner notes

The original text reads: "青花布啊青花布, 裁我一匹长裙布。 裁不裁啊裁不裁, 裁了让娘穿上身。"

Translation "Blue flowered fabric, oh blue flowered fabric, cut me a piece for a long dress. To cut or not, to cut or not, cut it to let my mother wear."

Here "布" not only refers to "fabric", but also

carries a strong regional and cultural color, representing the traditional handicrafts and lifestyle of northern Shaanxi. The word "裁" means "to cut" and carries the deep emotion of making clothes for one's mother. "娘", a word commonly used to address mothers in northern Shaanxi, is even more affectionate and emotional. Liners such as "啊" and "不" are used to emphasize the tone and enhance the rhythmic beauty of the song. In the translation, the translator should try to keep the rhythm and emotion of the original song instead of just translating it literally. For example, "青花布" is translated as "Blue flowered fabric", which not only conveys the meaning of "布", but also retains the meaning of "花" and "布" in the original song. The words "花" and "青" in the original song are also retained (Zhang, 2021). When translating, it is very crucial to deal with the liner notes. For example, there may be no direct correspondence between "啊" and "不" in English, but similar effects can be achieved by other means such as intonation, repetition, and so on. For example, "娘" is translated as "my mother", which is more favorable to foreign readers' understanding from an overall point of view, even though it loses some regional characteristics in the literal sense.

4.2 The Song of the Husbandman - analyzing the beauty of rhyme and rhetoric

Original text: 山高路远夫君行， 两眼望断尘土情。 挑夫啊， 夫君啊， 何日归来家乡城。

The phrase "挑夫啊， 夫君啊", which appears many times in the song, has the rhetorical effect of repetition and echo, enhancing the depth of emotion and strengthening the rhythm of the song. The phrases "山高路远" and "两眼望断" are typical counterpoints, echoing back and forth to form a balance, which not only harmonizes the phrases but also strengthens the musicality of the lyrics. The phrase "两眼望断尘土情" uses the word "望断" as a metaphor for deep waiting and longing, which expresses the deep emotion for her husband (Wang, 2019). When translating, the rhythm of the original song should be maintained as much as possible so that the translated text also has musicality. For example, "山高路远" can be translated as

"Mountains high, roads far" to keep the rhythm of English. It is crucial to make sure that the emotions in the original song are properly conveyed. For example, "两眼望断尘土情" can be translated as "eyes weary gazing through the dusty air", trying to retain the deep feeling and waiting meaning of the original line. Some rhetorical devices may not have direct equivalents in English, so they need to be translated flexibly. For example, "挑夫啊， 夫君啊" can be translated as "Oh carrier, my dear husband". "my dear", and try to express the emotional intensity of the original sentence as much as possible.

4.3 The High Slopes of Loess - analyzing the beauty of cultural and emotional factors

Original text: 黄土高坡上种黍， 风吹黍穗儿舞。 那个娘子多憔悴， 盼望儿子从军归。

Translation: On the high loess plateau, sorghum is grown, The wind makes the sorghum dance in a gentle blow. How the mother looks weary and worn, Hoping for her son to Hoping for her son to return from where he's gone.

Loess high slopes: a natural landscape unique to northern Shaanxi, fully reflecting the geography and traditional agricultural culture of northern Shaanxi. Planting corn and wind-blown corn is a depiction of the daily life of farmers in northern Shaanxi. Through the depiction of daily labor, it shows the simple and industrious state of life of the people in northern Shaanxi. I hope my son will return from the army: it reflects the traditional Chinese culture of filial piety and the deep emotional ties between families and also reflects the social background at that time, when many young people went out of their homes to join the army, and their families were always looking forward to their safe return. The phrase "黄土高坡" is translated as "high loess plateau", which tries to keep the regional cultural characteristics of the original text, so that readers can perceive this special land (Gou, 2016). The word "憔悴" in "那个娘子多憔悴" is not only an adjective, but also a reflection of the mother's deep concern and endless waiting. The translation "How the mother looks weary and worn" aims to convey this deep

emotion as much as possible. When translating, the rhythmic sense of English should be taken into consideration, for example, "The wind makes the sorghum dance in a gentle blow" complements the original text in structure and rhyme, and at the same time maintains the musicality.

4.4 "Water Runs Down the Little River" - analyzing the beauty of musicality and rhythm

Original text: 小河淌水哗啦啦，过我门前不停住。我家有个小板凳，谁坐谁儿高高兴兴。

Translation: The brook murmurs as it flows, Passing my door, it never slows. In my house, a small wooden stool lies, Whoever sits, joy reflects in their eyes.

The use of “哗啦啦” in the original text gives a clear sound of water flowing, thus bringing out the image of the brook. The repetition of "谁坐谁儿高高兴兴" increases the sense of rhythm and makes the whole song more rhythmic (Du, 2010). In the translation, "The brook murmurs as it flows" expresses the imagery of "小河淌水哗啦啦". The use of the word "murmurs" helps readers to capture the musicality of the original text in English, and "joy reflects in their eyes" is a better translation than the direct translation of "happy". is more descriptive than the direct translation "高高兴兴", which is also more in line with the English expression. In the translation, the musicality of the original text is preserved as much as possible, for example, the onomatopoeia of "哗啦啦" is translated as "murmurs", which also brings a sense of music to the reader in English. The English translation strives to be consistent with the original in terms of sentence length and syllables to ensure that the rhyme and rhythm of the song will not be destroyed. Translators also need to pay attention to cultural equivalence and adaptation. For example, "板凳" in the original text is translated as "wooden stool" in the translation, which ensures cultural transmission and is in line with English custom.

Summarize

To summarize, translation aesthetics has

important value and contribution to the English translation of northern Shaanxi folk songs. To make Shaanbei folk songs go to the world better, future research should be more systematic and in-depth, emphasizing the technicality of translation as well as its artistry and culture. By encouraging interdisciplinary and cross-cultural cooperative research, such as musicology, folklore, linguistics, etc., translators are provided with a more comprehensive and multi-faceted research vision, so that the folk songs of northern Shaanxi can continue to have the vitality of inheritance.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest to this work.

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