A Probe into the English Translation Strategy of Zhuang Folklore Lexis based Computer Assisted Multimedia Platform

Yingfeng Deng¹, Yunyun Zhu²
¹School of Foreign Studies, Guangxi Normal University for Nationalities, Chongzuo532200, Guangxi, China
²School of Foreign Studies, Guilin University of Electronic Technology, Guilin 541004, Guangxi, China

*Corresponding author(Yingfeng Deng, E-mail: 182829780@qq.com)

Abstract

Under the background of China’s cultural soft power construction, the English translation of ethnic culture plays an increasing important role in global cultural communication. This paper research on the English translation strategy by using computer assisted multimedia platform. English translation strategy of Zhuang folklore lexis is discussed from the perspective of skopos theory, the conclusion is that in the English translation process, strategies like transliteration with interpretation, literal translation with notes, free translation and picture-text combination and application of multimedia could be adopted comprehensively. With such strategies, culture information carried in Zhuang folk culture could be displayed maximally in English culture, so as to realize the purpose of effective cross-cultural communication. Applying functionalist translation skopos theory to a specific ethnic culture is a worthwhile try in English translation studies, it may give some suggestion for other ethnic culture translation.

Key words: Multimedia-aided teaching, Visualization, Folklore lexis, English translation strategy

1. INTRODUCTION

With the development and popularization of multimedia, multimedia-aided teaching has increasingly become the main means of higher education, and gradually shows its advantages compared with the traditional teaching mode. Multimedia teaching has characteristics as practical, cultural, intellectual content and fun, which fully mobilize and give full play to teachers’ teaching and students’ learning enthusiasm. The multimedia teaching method with visual and auditory synchronous use, can improve the efficiency and frequency of listening and speaking training, promote the exchange of information between teachers and students, teaching resources sharing and cooperation. Zhuang Nationality is an ethnic group, and it is displaying culture of its own nationality and improving cultural discourse power on the globalization culture stage through the bridge of language translation. Now Zhuang is getting more active and proactive to act as an indispensable branch in Chinese nations under the background of vigorously strengthening cultural soft power construction in China. As the largest ethnic minority in China, Zhuang language is spoken by more than 17 million people, and other minorities like Dong, Dai, and Buyi, are of the same root as Zhuang, their languages have much in common. So a study to English translation strategy of Zhuang folklore lexis, which is a branch of Zhuang Language, may give some help to the English translation of languages of Dong, Dai, and Buyi. At the same time, under the background of cultural globalization, it is quite necessary to construct and maintain a relatively stable cultural identity in global communication. Since publicity-oriented translation demand of Zhuang folk culture is increasing constantly under the background of cultural soft power construction, it is significant to carry out this study.

Folk culture is a cultural event which is produced and inherited in folk, and passed generation by generation, and it is a series of material and spiritual cultural phenomena formed by common people in the production and living process. Folk culture of Zhuang Nationality occupies an important position in Chinese folk culture as the largest ethnic minority in China. It plays an indispensable role in the process of Chinese folk global communication. Diversified strategies are adopted in translation due to the diversity in folk culture of Zhuang Nationality. It is very critical to properly translate folk cultures at different levels and different branches. Since folk culture composition of Zhuang Nationality is unique, such as Zhuang Language deeply affected by Zhuang nationality ethical cognitive pattern, unique singing gathering culture, festival culture related to rice production, totem worship in farming culture, etc. These folk cultures are available only in Zhuang nationality. Therefore, translating diversified and unique folk cultures properly is a very challenging process. This study aims to compare Zhuang language, culture expression mode, thinking mode and behavior mode with related aspects of English culture more comprehensively in details, discover proper English translation strategy and skills in Zhuang-Chinese-English translation process for Zhuang folklore lexis, so as to present the most fundamental thinking features in Zhuang folk culture in English.

Since the Zhuang-Chinese-English translation process for Zhuang folklore lexis in this study is defined as a publicity-oriented translation process, the author tries to explore English translation strategies and skills of Zhuang folklore lexis under the theoretical framework from the perspective of German functionalist translation.

2. COMPUTER ASSISTED MULTIMEDIA PLATFORM

2.1. Multimedia technology

IBM Company will be defined as multimedia video, images, audio, graphics and text at the fusion of multiple levels, through the production of computers to make mutual induction. The key of multimedia is the combination of images, sound and animation to form a learning tool for people to use. It takes the computer as the core, the interactive processing all kinds of multimedia information, and carries on the effective control through the computer, causes the information to establish the effective logical connection, thus manifests the more abundant information. Four main features: multimedia integrated, controllable, interactive and digital. They are far beyond the ordinary books and video content, so they are widely used in the field of education. Based on these characteristics, people are no longer passive acceptance to literature, sound, image and video. Multimedia technology includes: audio technology, video technology, data compression and decompression technology, large capacity optical storage technology, hypertext and hypermedia link technology, media synchronization technology, multimedia network technology. The multimedia computer system is composed of six parts respectively is: CAI multimedia application, multimedia systems, multimedia core input / output control interface, multimedia real-time compression and decompression, multimedia computer hardware.

The multimedia content is rich, it includes video, text, audio that other traditional textbooks cannot cover, compared to the past which were only described by oral or written content. Especially for the Anglo American literature teaching, teachers can use multimedia to some acoustic data, introduce the background of literary works, etc., to show the students through the video or audio, make the students vividly understand teaching content in the limited time. The traditional teaching activities can be used by teachers, the main tool is the blackboard, textbooks and exercise books. By contrast, multimedia teaching has effectively solved the problem of insufficient information. With the development of multimedia technology, its application field is more and more widely and the advantages in education field are becoming more prominent.
2.2. Multimedia teaching

Multimedia can create a beautiful and efficient learning environment, give full play to the students’ autonomous learning function, the classroom teaching is more flexible and effective. Because of its convenience, high multimedia interactivity can effectively avoid cramming teaching, help students follow the teacher's ideas, take notes in class. The use of multimedia can promote the exchange of emotion between teachers and students, stimulate students' interest, virtually narrow the distance between teachers and students, create a good classroom atmosphere. Multimedia teaching can also show color, sound, animation and video; previous study shows that color can eliminate the students' learning pressure, ease their tension. Also the words can be highlighted in the multimedia teaching by changing the colors and bold, pictures and videos can provide more intuitive teaching, classroom teaching can be injected more vitality.

Figure 3. Multimedia teaching

3. OVERVIEW OF FUNCTIONALIST TRANSLATION SKOPOS THEORY

German functionalist translation skopos theory emerged in the 1980s. Main representative figures include Katharina Reiss, Hans-J. Vemeer, Justa-Holz-Mänttäri and Christiane-Nord. Reiss is the pioneer of functionalist translation skopos theory. The ideology prototype of the theory is proposed in his work Translation Criticism: The Potentials &Limitations, (1971/2000). The contribution Reiss had made to functionalist translation skopos theory could be concluded as: first, she goes beyond words, phrases, and sentences to focus on text. “The importance of Reiss’s theory is that it overcomes the disadvantage of focusing only on words, phrases, and sentences in traditional translation studies, and turns its attention of translation theory from lower linguistic level to the higher level of communicative objective of translation” Second, Reiss’s theory offers a comparatively objective and more feasible translation criticism pattern. The most significant contributions of Reiss to translation research include text classification model, relevant translation strategy and translation evaluation standard. Third, the theory provides a functional model of combining intralingual elements and extralingual elements together. Vermeer is a student of Reiss. He proposed the core theory—skopos theory thereof on the basis of developing the theory of Reiss. Vermeer believes that translation is a purposeful and intercultural communicative action of people. Strategies adopted in the translation process are determined by translation purpose. Three principles of translation were proposed: purpose, coherence and loyalty. Vermeer's theory is separated from the fence of domestication or foreignization, and similarity in form or spirit, literal translation or free translation and other binary oppositions which are argued constantly over the years in translation study field.

The theory of source text supremacy was questioned. Mänttäri published Translatorishes Handle: Theorie und Method: Translational Action: Theory and Method in 1984. In the work, translational action theory was proposed formally, “translational action is the process of producing a message transmitter of a certain kind, designed to be employed in superordinate action systems in order to coordinate actional and communicative cooperation” ; the scope of translation research was expanded; more attention was paid to the autonomy and subjectivity of the translator, the view in previous translation studies of regarding translators as 'servant', 'matchmaker' and 'ferryman', etc. was abandoned. The status of the translators in translation was improved. They could enjoy more freedom and responsibility. Nord is a student of Reiss. She firstly introduced the principle of 'function+ loyalty' in skopos theory in 1989, which had greatly improved the theory. “The translation commission analysis follows up Holz-Mänttäri’s work on the players within the translational action. The intended text functions pursues Reiss and Vermeer’s skopos, but without giving overall dominance to the skopos. The ST analysis, influenced by Reiss’s work, gives due attention to the communicative function and genre features of the ST type and language, but without the rigidity of other taxonomies”.

In other word, various intralingual and extratextual factors about translation are considered according to viewpoint of functionalist translation skopos theory. Different translation strategies can realize more functions in
target language culture, and they have the value for existence. Therefore, translators can completely adopt one or more translation strategies flexibly according to translation purpose in the process of translation. Functionalist translation skopos theory can provide translators with flexible and dynamic language culture processing patterns aiming at the diversity and uniqueness of Zhuang folk culture.

4. ENGLISH TRANSLATION STRATEGY OF ZHUANG FOLKLORE LEXIS

Folklore can be divided into the following classes: material folklore, including housing, clothing, food, production, transportation, trade, etc.; social folklore, including family, extended family, village, non-governmental organization, season, life custom, etc.; spiritual folklore, including witchcraft, belief, religion, taboos, mouthpiece language, folklore performance, sports, etc. Therefore, folklore lexis can be naturally divided as: material folklore lexis, such as bronze drum, five-colored glutinous rice, ganlan, three-layer custom, etc.; social folklore lexis, such as Buluofujia custom, dual funeral, Double Third Day Singing Gathering, Maguai festival, etc.; and spirit folk culture, such as huapo, Baeuqloxdoh, folk master, etc.

The uniqueness of cultural information carried by the folk culture is determined by the uniqueness of Zhuang culture. In addition, Zhuang folklore lexis contains very rich information. In general, extension meaning of folklore lexis is more extensive, and Zhuang folklore lexis is no exception. Translated words being completely equal to the Zhuang folklore lexis can not be found in the process of English translation, namely cultural vacancy or cultural default can be found in the translation process. “Meaning vacuum state can be produced for readers in different language culture background, since they are lack of corresponding schemata, information in the text can not be linked with knowledge and experience outside the text. Therefore, it is difficult to establish discourse coherence and semantic coherence necessary for understanding the discourse.” The author believes that cultural default or blank could be culturally compensated under the guidance of functionalist translation skopos theory. Different translation strategies and skills are adopted comprehensively according to different conditions in the English translation process of Zhuang folklore lexis, so as to reach the fundamental purposes that culture information carried in Zhuang folk culture is displayed maximally in English culture, which can be comprehended and recognized by audience maximally, and effective cross-cultural communication can be realized finally.

Skopos theory shows that any translation is purposeful. Translation strategies are determined by translation purpose. Therefore, the author thinks that thinking way, knowledge background, psychological expectation and other factors of target language readers are fully considered under the perspective of skopos theory. Four translation strategies of Transliteration with interpretation, literal translation with notes, free translation and picture-text combination, etc. should be flexibly selected in English translation process of Zhuang folklore lexis. Translation purposes can be reached finally: the information carried by Zhuang folklore lexis can be effectively transferred maximally in the target language, and acceptance and identity of target language readers can be obtained.

4.1. Transliteration with interpretation

Differences in language and culture are produced due to differences in the aspects of history, life customs, geographical environment, production mode, religious beliefs, etc. Corresponding references can not be necessarily found in the life of English nation aiming at matters in life of Zhuang people, such as person names, place names, plant names, animals, animal names, god names, hero names, etc. It is obvious that equivalent words of many specific words can not be found in English vocabulary for replacement and translation. The translation strategy of transliteration with interpretation can be adopted under this condition, namely English sound effect transplantation can be implemented when the words are translated into English. Pronunciation of Zhuang language can be reproduced in the target language, which should be provided with necessary annotation. Therefore, target language readers can further understand it after recognition of new matters, and the matters can be accepted conveniently.

For example, Zhuang Festival “蚂拐节” can be translated into Maguai Festival. Maguai Festival is also called Mother Frog Festival or Frog Festival, and it is a festival celebrated in Donglan County, Nandan County and Tian’er County in the Hongshui River basin of Guangxi. A series of Maguai worship folk activities are held by Zhuang people during the Maguai festival in first month of the Chinese lunar calendar, including folk song signing, Maguai dance and other events. It is a folk activity for Zhuang people to ask for peace, good harvest and human-animal thriving prospect. Two words of “Maguai Festival” are not enough, which can not convey cultural connotation of Maguai Festival. Readers of target language can comprehend the cultural connotation carried by Maguai Festival only through adding necessary interpretations. Therefore, the following information should be attached: “Maguai Festival, also called Mother Frog Festival or Frog Festival, is celebrated in Donglan county, Nandan county, and Tian’e county in the Hongshui River basin of Guangxi during first month of the Chinese lunar calendar, which includes many different activities to show Zhuang people’s respect for frogs. Such customs demonstrates Zhuang people’s wish for fine weather, a good harvest as well as happiness
and good fortune in the coming year."

“布洛陀” is interpreted as ‘pau5 (lord) lo1 (knows) to6(everything)’ in Zhuang language, namely a lord or intelligent ancestor who knows everything. After English phonetics resources are utilized for misspelling transplantation for “布洛陀”, it can be translated into “Baeuqloxdoh”. In “Baeuqloxdoh Epic”—an epic of Zhuang nationality, Baeuqloxdoh is a supreme ancestor who knows and controls everything. It is a humanized master gold, which is similar to god in English culture. Therefore, the proper noun of Baeuqloxdoh can be integrally translated into “Baeuqloxdoh, transliterated from Zhuang language, referring to the Lord of Zhuang people, the earliest ancestor of Zhuang.”

“那文化”can be translated as ‘Na Culture, --Na is transliterated from Zhuang language, which means paddy field. It refers to the unique rice-planting culture system of Zhuang people”. It not only reserves pronunciation of “Na” in Zhuang language, but also conveys the nation culture information contained in the word effectively. Readers of target language can be further attracted to acquire the information that the locals see “na” as the center of their life and come to develop a unique “na” culture system.

4.2. Literal translation with notes

Literal translation not only keeps the original content, but also maintains translation strategy of the original form. Since Zhuang folklore lexis contains rich contents, extended meanings of the words are more extensive, the translated text by literal translation always can not cover all culture information contained in the original language. Misunderstanding and misinterpretation can be produced by readers in target language culture. Under this condition, the strategy of literal translation with notes can better solve the problem.

For example, “二次葬” can be translated as “Dual Funeral”, and the following information can be added “Years after burying the corpse in the ground, the bones are picked up and a second ceremony is held to dispose of them. Picking bones and the second burial are regarded by Zhuang people as a housewarming for the dead person.’ Then, the culture information contained in 'Dual Funeral” can be transferred to target language readers more effectively, and more efficient cross-cultural communication can be realized.

Five-colored Glutinous Rice is one of the most unique foods for Zhuang Nationality, and it is necessary food for Zhuang Double Third Day Singing Gathering and other festivals. The so-called five colors include white, black, red, purple, and yellow. The glutinous rice composed of five colors is quite beautiful, and its taste is also full of praise. The following information can be added after literal translation of “Five-colored Glutinous Rice”: Five-colored Glutinous Rice: before glutinous rice, it is soaked separately in maple-leave juice, purple-and-blue grass juice, red grass juice, yellow ginger juice to dye it black, purple, red and yellow. With its original color white, Five-colored Glutinous Rice is made. It tastes very fresh and with a bit of sweetness’. Readers of target language not only can comprehend raw materials of Five-colored Glutinous Rice, but also can understand its production method and taste, thereby promoting successful cross-cultural communication.

“三层楼” in Zhuang costume can be literally translated into “Three-layer Custom”. Three-layer Custom belongs to Zhuang women costume which is common in Longlin County of Guangxi. Since it is composed of black short blouse, white long trousers and blue skirt, it looks like Zhuang building with clear levels, it is called “Three-layer Custom”. Therefore, the following information should be added after literal translation: “Zhuang traditional women costume in Longlin County, which consists of three layers: the short blouse, the pleated skirt, and the trousers.”

4.3. Free translation

The author has written a thesis to compare Zhuang folk culture and western folk culture. The conclusion is that both folklore are similar in folk culture. However, more differences are manifested due to factors as production mode, history, geography, religion belief, etc. Therefore, the above-mentioned translation strategies can be adopted, and free translation strategy is also a necessary mean in order to achieve the translation purpose of efficient cross-cultural communication in English translation process of Zhuang folklore lexis. Many examples show that free translation embodies difference of different languages in ecological culture, language culture, religion culture, material culture, social culture, etc. A nation’s language features also can be embodied by free translation. Free translation strategy has some advantages itself, which can compensate the methods which can not be achieved by literal translation. The translated text is concise and clear with less ambiguity after free translation, which can be comprehended by readers in target language more easily.

For example, the word “背带” can not accurately convey the meaning that “背带” is a cloth pack for Zhuang people to carry infants by literal translation. When free translation strategy is adopted, the word is translated into ‘carrying-baby packs’, and the object of “背带” can be better conveyed in target language. Misunderstanding or ambiguity caused by literal translation can be avoided.

Furthermore, the word “歌圩” can be literally translated into ‘singing market’, what is the possible meaning of singing gathering for readers in target language? Is it a market of transaction by singing or market of signing
performance? The so-called “歌圩” originally referred to a form that Zhuang people held festival gathering for signing activity in specific time and venue. ‘Since antiphonal singing is adopted as main body in the activity, each gathering is composed of more than one thousand people, signing competition day ‘Longzhou County Log’ is similar to a signing market, then people called it ‘signing gathering’ subsequently [7]. It is obvious that dynamic antiphonal singing’ is emphasized for ‘song’. While, ‘market’ refers to warm scene and happy atmosphere that people gather for antiphonal singing, signing gathering has no necessary linkage with street market or fair market. Therefore, ‘歌圩’ should be translated into ‘signing gathering’ more properly according to free translation strategy. The culture image of signing gathering’ can be conveyed in cross-cultural communication, thereby reaching the expected translation purpose.

4.4. Picture-text combination and application of multimedia

It is believed in functionalist translation skopos theory that cross-cultural communication text not only contains text, but also includes pictures, sound, body language and other texts related to other media in translation-an intercultural communication action. Images are adopted for assisting translation for properly meeting the requirement of uniqueness and complexity in Zhuang folklore lexis on the basis of literal translation. In addition, the to-be-conveyed culture information can become more concise and direct by picture-text combination. Culture image can be more vivid and funny, thereby attaining the result with half effort in cross-cultural communication. Therefore, images, transliteration with interpretation, literal translation with notes, free translation and other translation strategies can be combined as picture-text strategy in the process of translation. For example, “杆栏”、“铜鼓”、“绣球” and “壮锦” in Zhuang nationality can be translated into “ganlan”, “bronze drum”, “embroidered ball” and “Zhuang brocade”, and physical pictures can be attached besides the translation. Therefore, readers of target language can achieve more direct information of the objects, the cultural information carried by the objects can be clearly transferred, and it can be regarded as an effective auxiliary translation compensation means. In addition, multimedia technology means has become a necessary means of Chinese-English translation of China’s global communication with the development of modern science and technology. Therefore, modern advanced multimedia communication means also can be adopted in the process of Zhuang culture translation. Voice, video and other means are added on the basis of text + picture, so global communication of Zhuang folk culture can be three-dimensional. And more information and explanation modes can be provided for target language readers. Related disc is attached to the book of Prof. David Holm’s Killing a Buffalo for the Ancestors: A Zhuang Cosmological Text from Southwest China. Therefore, readers can achieve more comprehensive and correct information of the work.

The following table is made to simply demonstrate the translation results (detailed translations are not included):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy adopted</th>
<th>Source language</th>
<th>Chinese meaning</th>
<th>Target language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(A)</td>
<td>Cietduzgo-p</td>
<td>蚊节</td>
<td>Maguai Festival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Baeuqlox-doh</td>
<td>布洛陀</td>
<td>Baeuql-oxdoh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reemx rox naz</td>
<td>那文化</td>
<td>Na culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(B)</td>
<td>senj deih</td>
<td>二次葬</td>
<td>DualFuneral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>haj sack</td>
<td>五色糯米饭</td>
<td>five-colored steame-d sticky rice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>hauexnaenlj</td>
<td>三层楼</td>
<td>three-layer custom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>buh vaq vanj</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(C)</td>
<td>Nda haw fwen</td>
<td>背带歌圩</td>
<td>nda singing gatheri-ng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(D)</td>
<td>ranzgyan</td>
<td>杆栏</td>
<td>ganlan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>aennyenz</td>
<td>铜鼓</td>
<td>bronze drum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lwg domq</td>
<td>绣球</td>
<td>embroil-dered ball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>fanman</td>
<td>壮锦</td>
<td>Zhuang brocade</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As what suggested by skopos theory, the above strategies could be employed together in one translation process if necessary. For example, pictures can be attached to many Zhuang folklore lexis English translations, which would help target readers to better understand the culture.

Modern multimedia technology also can be adopted in Zhuang culture translation process, thereby forming cultural transmission integrated channel and promoting effective cross-cultural communication.

5. CONCLUSION
Difficult English translation process is determined by the diversity and uniqueness of Zhuang folklore lexis. The theory and method of German functionalist translation skopos theory can provide it with proper guidance. Effective cross-cultural communication is regarded as guidance of the ultimate translation purpose. Four translation strategies of transliteration with interpretation, literal translation with notes, free translation and picture-text combination and application of multimedia, etc. should be flexibly selected or combined together; meanwhile, taking factors as culture background of readers in target language, mental expectation, thinking mode and other factors into consideration would help culture information carried by Zhuang folklore lexis to be transferred maximally to readers in target language, the culture transfer efficiency and audience acceptance can be improved, and the ultimate purpose of translation-efficient cross-cultural communication can be realized.

So far, applying functionalist skopos theory to Zhuang folklore lexis English translation is a new try in specific culture translation of ethnic groups. What the author has done may give enlightenment to the English translation studies of other cultures.

Acknowledgements

This study is supported by the Foundation program: 2015 Guangxi Philosophy and Social Sciences Planning Project: A Study on the Chinese-English Translation of Zhuang Culture Under the Background of Culture Soft Power Construction (No. 15EYY001).

Reference