



C-E Translation Analysis of the Article Artistic Characteristics of Opera Character Paper-Cuts in Xinjiang in the CEA Framework

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<p>Abstract: The Chinese government promotes the spreading of Chinese culture worldwide to enhance the soft power of China internationally. In this circumstance, translation of folk culture holds great significance since it constitutes an integral part of cultural heritage, and through translation, a wider audience can appreciate these diverse cultures in different areas of China and better understand the Chinese culture in general. Based on the background of rural cultural reconstruction and the urgent situation of inheriting the precious intangible cultural heritage, the student translator took the article <i>On the Artistic Characteristics of Opera Character paper-cuts in Xinjiang Area of Shanxi Province</i> as the source text for her translation project. The framework of “Comprehension, Expression and Adaptation” is chosen to analyse the translation process: how the translator solved the problems encountered in understanding the text in source language, expressing the similar meaning in target language and adaptations made to bridge the cultural gap between the two languages.</p> <p>Keywords: Xinjiang area in Shanxi Province, Opera Character paper-cuts, Comprehension, Expression, Adaptation.</p> <p>Copyright © 2024 The Author(s): This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0) which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial use provided the original author and source are credited.</p>	<p>Review Paper</p>
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	<p>How to cite this paper: Gao Yang & Ji Lingzhu (2024). C-E Translation Analysis of the Article Artistic Characteristics of Opera Character Paper-Cuts in Xinjiang in the CEA Framework. <i>Middle East Res J. Humanities Soc. Sci.</i>, 4(2): 33-41.</p>
	<p>Article History: Submit: 16.03.2024 Accepted: 17.04.2024 Published: 18.04.2024 </p>

INTRODUCTION

The translation analysis is written to sum up the translator’s experiences and lessons learned from the process and further fulfill the whole project of translation+post-translation reflections. The body is composed of five parts, giving a review of the translation process and analyzing the representative examples of resolving translation difficulties in possible ways. In the third part, by utilizing the “CEA” Framework proposed by professor Li Changshuan, nine examples are used to illustrate how the student translator attempted to tackle the problems in comprehending the source text, expressing the meaning and conveying the Chinese local culture-loaded content in the target language, and making adaptations.

1. TRANSLATION TASK

1.1 The Background of Subject Selection

Xinjiang County, situated in the southwest of Shanxi Province, boasts a wealth of historical and cultural heritage. As a national-level city with profound historical and cultural significance, it has borne witness to numerous dynastic changes since its inception during

the Spring and Autumn Period when it served as one of the capitals of Jin State (11th century B.C-349B.C.). Additionally, Xinjiang County is renowned for being the birthplace of the world famous Jiangzhou Drum Music which dates back to primitive times in late Neolithic Age according to the archeological objects; however, it reached new heights during Tang Dynasty earning global recognition as The Famous City of Seventy-two Trades. Consequently, its culture flourished as its economy developed. It became a land of various kinds of folk arts: opera, paper cutting, woodblock new year prints, dough sculpture etc. Xinjiang opera paper-cutting is in the list of intangible cultural heritage of Shanxi Province with high artistic value closely linked with local opera culture.

1.2 The Source Text

The source text employed is the article *On the Artistic Characteristics of Opera Character paper-cuts in Xinjiang Area of Shanxi Province*. Taking Shanxi Xinjiang Opera paper-cut as a research object, the author demonstrates the distinctive evolution of Shanxi Xinjiang opera paper-cut art from its historical origins, cultural significance in paper-cutting traditions, psychological impact on individuals, and profound

cultural connotations. This exploration holds immense importance in effectively preserving and promoting

Xinjiang, Shanxi culture and even Yellow River civilization.



P1: Seventh Grade County Magistrate



P2: Bao Questioning the Stones

Courtesy of Madame Su Lanhua

1.3 The Significance of the Project

In history, Chinese fine arts have had four components: the palace, the literati's, the religious and the folk. The literati paintings have been the most popular in research circles, becoming the representative of the traditional art, whereas folk art has always been neglected. As the changes of time and trends of social thoughts, the dominant position is not immutable. Since folk art is deeply rooted in life and reflect people's real life, the art workers and researchers have already turned their attention to it. Folk paper-cuts is an art form cultivated in Chinese folk which is the splendid culture

retained by the Chinese nation in the long history of culture. The working people have developed their aesthetic judgement in their productive activities to create their material life. Shanxi Xinjiang opera character paper-cuts is one of the best witnesses. The translation of opera character paper-cuts in Xinjiang area of Shanxi Province is conducive to national demands of spreading Chinese culture so that overseas readers can understand and feel the charm of Chinese paper-cuts. We can also enhance the soft power of Chinese culture, national pride and confidence through this practice.



P3: Pipe-smoking Farmer
Courtesy of Madame Yan Yiner



p4: The Waist Drummer
Courtesy of Madame Su Lanhua

2. TRANSLATION PROCESS

2.1 Preparation

After reading the article conscientiously, the student translator made some preparations before translating. At the first place she analyzed the textual features of the source text. Lexically, she examined the culture-loaded words, such as names of opera translation

and traditional Chinese poem translation in the source text from different kinds of reference materials. Syntactically, most sentences are informal with lucid meaning, but the writings of classical Chinese and writings in poetic forms were cited in the article. From the cultural aspect, the article contains rich cultural context and information.

The culture gap between the two languages needs to be bridged as much as possible, thus the translator should take flexible translation strategies in the course of translation.

The translator read the available materials focusing on the history of Shanxi Xinjiang area. To grasp the basic knowledge about opera translation, the translator made primary research on the opera titles that were addressed in the source text.

2.2. Translating and Proofreading

In the process of first attempt, instead of rigidly adhering to the sentence structure of the source text, the student translator combined and splits the source sentences to convey the meaning into proper English. After finishing the first draft, the translator read the whole translated text and adjusted the grammatical structures according to the context. In the second draft, the detailed information from the source text and the draft target text were compared and checked very carefully to confirm the accuracy. In the third draft, the translator deleted all the source text, leaving only the translated target text. The cohesion and coherence of the text have been improved, and the opera titles and poetry translation have been upgraded. And under the guidance of the instructor, she learned to understand the article from the perspective of the audience and strive to be accurate and effective in the process of translation. The course of proofreading further strengthened the translator's understanding of the source text, and helped the translator with the polishing process.

3. ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK

Professor Li's CEA Framework

CEA translation method is a translation report framework proposed by Professor Li Changshuan, which includes three core elements: Comprehension, Expression and Adaptation. This method is designed to help translation students improve their translation skills and apply them to translation projects in practice.

3.1 Comprehension

The translation process is built upon this foundation. Professor Li argues that "understanding" may seem self-evident, but in reality, it is not innate; unfortunately, many studies overlook the significance

and essence of "comprehension," neglecting the aspects of "letter" and "cut." To truly understand means to unveil the truth concealed within words. During the translation process, one must pay attention to various factors such as the author's background, text characteristics, as well as the translation context in order to make appropriate choices regarding content adaptation. At this stage, translators need to thoroughly comprehend both the content and contextual information of the source text. Understanding goes beyond surface-level meanings; it necessitates grasping underlying implications, contexts, and cultural backgrounds embedded within the original text. To achieve this objective effectively, translators should employ critical thinking skills to identify problems and resolve them through thorough investigation and research.

3.2 Expression

The translator must accurately convey the meaning of the original text to the target audience based on a thorough understanding of it. This necessitates a strong language foundation, extensive vocabulary knowledge, and adept use of the target language for expression. During this stage, attention should be paid to maintaining the style, tone, and discourse structure of the original text while ensuring fluency and readability in translation.

3.3 Adaptation

In the process of translation, the translator must make appropriate adjustments to the original text based on the requirements and cultural background of the target audience. This may involve rewriting, omitting or adding content to better suit the intended readership. At this stage, it is crucial for translators to possess cross-cultural communication skills and be adaptable to different cultural backgrounds in order to ensure effective communication through translation.

In conclusion, the CEA translation method emphasizes three key aspects of the translation process: comprehension, expression, and adaptability. Its aim is to assist translation students in enhancing their skills for practical translation projects.

4. CASE ANALYSIS

Example 1: Background information

ST	新绛县古称絳州，位于山西省西南部，南临汾河，北沿丘陵。春秋时期曾为晋都，隋开皇三年（583）州治从玉壁迁至今县城处，距今已经有一千四百多年的历史。
TT1	Xinjiang County, formerly known as Jiangzhou, is situated in the southwestern part of Shanxi Province, with Fenhe River floating across its territory. During the Spring and Autumn period, it served as the capital of Jin and later became the county seat when Emperor Sui Kai relocated there in 583 AD.
TT2	Xinjiang County, known as Jiangzhou Prefecture in history, is situated in the southwestern part of Shanxi Province, with Fenhe River floating across its territory. During the Spring and Autumn period (770B.C.-476B.C or 770B.C.-453B.C), it served as the capital of Jin, and later the prefecture centre moved here from Yubi in 583A.D. during the reign (581-600AD) of the first Emperor (Yang Jian) in Sui Dynasty.

Analysis

First of all, for the translation of ancient Chinese culture, the translator should make some necessary explanations. Xinjiang was a prefecture in ancient times; therefore, the concepts of "old prefecture" and "prefecture" need to be specially noted in the translation.

Secondly, the translation of ancient Chinese dynasties is also a special part of translation. In the translation of dynasties, it is necessary to use the bracket to reflect the specific time period and give the reader a specific concept of time. At the same time, in the process of revision, the translator added a specific description of Yang Jian, making the whole sentence more readable.

Example 2: Context

ST	盛唐时期更是繁荣昌盛，“南绛北代，忻州不赖”正是这一时期的真实写照。
TT	During peak period of Tang Dynasty, Jiangzhou experienced its peak in prosperity; The saying “In Shanxi, Jiangzhou in the south, Daizhou in the north and Xinzhou in the middle are good places” accurately depicts its important position.

Analysis

First of all, for the translation of the Chinese four-character idiom "繁荣昌盛", the translator adopts a more acceptable expression, using "experience" as the verb, leading to the phrase "experience its peak in prosperity", which is concise and clear, and full of dynamic sense. It shows the flourishing condition of Jiangzhou in the prosperous period of Tang Dynasty.

In fact, translators also actively consult reference materials in the translation of proverbs, so that the translated version is more accurate. When translating Chinese proverbs, we should pay attention to the following. First of all, the translator should keep the original meaning. Translators should ensure that the original meaning of proverbs is accurately conveyed to avoid the distortion of meaning caused by literal translation. Secondly, translators should adapt to the target language culture in the process of translation. When translating Chinese proverbs into other languages, it is necessary to consider the cultural background and idioms of the target language, so that the translated proverbs are more in line with the understanding of the users of the target language. Thirdly, translators should pay attention to cultural differences: in the translation

process, they should pay attention to the differences between different cultures to avoid misunderstandings caused by cultural differences. Translators also need to avoid literal translation. Literal translation of proverbs should be avoided as far as possible, and free translation should be carried out according to the expression habits of the target language, so that the translated proverbs can be better understood by the users of the target language. Finally, the translators should explain appropriately. Some difficult Chinese proverbs can be properly interpreted after translation to help readers better understand their meanings.

An old folk saying in Shanxi goes, "南绛北代，忻州不赖" Jiangzhou is located in the rich land of Southwest Shanxi; Daizhou in North Shanxi had been a battleground between the majority Han and nomadic tribes in Chinese history, gradually becoming a military settlement. Xinzhou is located in the northern edge of Taiyuan Basin with relatively favorable natural conditions for agriculture and stock raising. All through the ages, these are good places in Shanxi Province. Therefore, "In Shanxi, Jiangzhou in the south, Daizhou in the north and Xinzhou in the middle are good places" more accurately expresses the original meaning.

Example 3: Writing in classical Chinese

SS	当地有这样的俗语：斩草人，替好人。
ST1	There is a local saying associated with this practice: "Cutting straw men to help normal men suffering from evil spirits."
ST2	There is a local saying associated with this practice: "Cutting straw men to bring good fortune to the patients."

Analysis

The translation of this proverb has been adjusted on the basis of the translator's first attempt. Translation 2 has been translated freely, directly eliminating the "bear bad luck for others" and directly changing to "accept good luck". The translator gave a specific interpretation of the original text, and this is not only limited to translating the basic meaning, but also expressed the blessing connotation behind it, which

echoed the center of this paragraph, making the article complete in structure and consistent in meaning.

When translating Chinese idioms, translators should avoid literal translation and choose the appropriate translation according to the content and context. At the same time, translators should refer to authoritative translations and learn from their translation skills and methods.

Example 4: Language details

SS	剪纸艺术，在全国分布面积较广，特别是华夏美心理，人情世态的差异，在特点、风格、面貌上也有很大的不同。
ST1	The distribution of paper-cut art is wide across the country, with significant differences in characteristics, style and themes reflecting the diverse psychology of Chinese culture.
ST2	The distribution of paper-cut art is wide across the country, with significant differences in characteristics, styles and themes reflecting the diverse aesthetic psychology of Chinese culture.

Analysis

The translator here used the replacement method, with the "aesthetic" to express the concept of "Chinese beauty" which shows a vivid image.

Example 5: Adjusting sentence structure for better expression in target language

SS	而新绛县从尧舜商周至明清，历代的古迹，传说之多，令人惊叹。
ST1	In Xinjiang County, from the Yao, Shun, Shang and Zhou Dynasties to the Ming and Qing Dynasties, there are numerous historic sites and legends that continue to amaze people.
ST2	In Xinjiang County, the number of historic sites and legends is so amazing that shocks everyone who happens to pay a little bit attention to the local history, dating back from the periods of Emperors Yao and Shun(late primitive society), Shang and Zhou Dynasties(about 1600-256BC) till the Ming and Qing Dynasties(1364-1911AD)

Analysis

First of all, for the translation of "Yao Shun Yu", the translator made a specific explanation, which is more conducive to readers' understanding in the second draft translation, based on the cultural background and time situation.

Secondly, in terms of sentence pattern, the translator has adjusted the word order and put the subject first, making the subject more prominent. At the same time, the sentence pattern is adjusted and the "so that" structure is adopted to make the logical relationship of the sentence clearer.

Example 6: Chinese ancient poem translation

SS	带有巫术意味的招魂剪纸早在唐诗中有所描写：“延客已曛黑，张灯启重门。暖汤濯我足，剪纸招我魂。
ST1	Extend an invitation to me during twilight. Illuminate the surroundings and open the entrances. Provide heated water for bathing my feet, and prepare paper-cutting activities calling back the spirit for my entire family
ST2	Extending an invitation to us during twilight. Illuminating the surroundings and opening the doors and gates. Heated water provided to bathe our feet, and paper-cuts prepared to ease our fright.

Analysis

For the poetry translation, the translator consulted the relevant reference materials. This is a poem written by Du Fu, a Chinese Tang Dynasty poet, to his friend Magistrate Sun County, thanking him for extending a helping hand during his escape. During the war years, people usually do not like the arrival of guests, let alone at the dark night. But Mr. Sun lit the light and opened the heavy doors and gates for them warmheartedly. The friendship between them is demonstrated vividly in the details.

The translator has revised it twice. She changed the imperative verb in the imperative sentence into the "ing" form to make the whole sentence more dynamic and implying Mr. Sun the subject to show Mr. Du Fu's sincere gratitude. Secondly, the translator also changed the latter two sentences to a passive form, which is more in line with the English expression norms and to show Mr. Sun's hospitality by what was done to the guests.

Example 7: Chinese opera name translation

SS	《柜中缘》
ST	“The Wardrobe as the Matchmaker”



P5: The Wardrobe as the Matchmaker

Courtesy of Madame Xin Baiqiao

Analysis

The names of opera often contain rich cultural connotation, which is an important part of its artistic value. Therefore, in the translation process, the translator needs to pay attention to accurately convey these cultural connotations to the target readers. This may require the translator to understand the cultural and historical background of the original opera, and make appropriate annotation or interpretation in the translation process. Secondly, the translator should also pay attention to the specific format of the opera name translation.

We take the “The Wardrobe as the Matchmaker” as an example to analyze.

First, we need to understand the specific meaning of the story. In the Song Dynasty, Yue Lei, the younger son of Yue Fei, a renowned hero in the resistance against foreign invaders in Song Dynasty (960-1279A.D.), sought refuge from pursuing soldiers by

concealing himself in the wardrobe of Yulan, a young maiden. After discovering this truth and knowing who Yuelei was, Yulan fell in love with this brave young man, and later they got married.

Secondly, the content of the story should be refined, and the English expression of the appropriate length should be found. Therefore, in the process of translation, we introduce the translation element of matchmaker, to make the opera name translation more accurate and effective.

Finally, pay attention to use italic form. After that, each opera translation was carried out in accordance with the above steps. And it is also necessary to find authoritative books to ensure the effectiveness of the opera name translation.

C. Adaption i. Addition

Example 8

SS	由于新绛县特殊的地理位置和悠久的历史，孕育了丰富的寺庙建筑、戏曲鼓乐、民俗美术等文化遗产。
ST1	Due to its special geographical location and time-honored, history, Xinjiang County has nurtured rich cultural heritages such as temple architecture, opera drum music, folk fines arts and so on.
ST2	Due to its special geographical location and time-honored history, Xinjiang County has nurtured rich cultural heritages such as temples of various religions and folk believes, mutiple types of opera, drum music, folk fine arts and so on.

Analysis

The translator adds her own thinking in the translation of "temple architecture". Temple architecture is not a single individual. People's worship of the temple

is also the worship of the Buddhist, Taoist and Islamic buddhas, folk gods and immortals. Therefore, the translation into “temples of various religions and folk believes” is more comprehensive and inclusive.

Example 9: Culture differences

SS	不论从内容到形式，都反映了一种美好的追求、对生活的热爱、对乡土的真情、对理想的追求、对幸福的祈望。
ST1	These artworks reflect a pursuit for beauty, love for life as well as genuine sentiments towards rural areas, encapsulating aspirations for ideals and yearning for happiness.
ST2	These artworks reflect a pursuit for beauty, love for life as well as genuine sentiments towards their homeland, encapsulating aspirations for ideals and yearning for happiness.

Analysis

Here "local" refers to Xinjiang county and areas historically under the jurisdiction of Jiangzhou Prefecture.

The unique cultural elements in local literature works are an important source of their charm, including local features, customs and pictures, spoken dialect and so on. In the process of translation, translators need to pay attention to retaining these cultural elements, so that the target language readers can feel the local flavor of the work. At the same time, the translator also needs to consider how to reproduce these cultural elements in the target language, so that they can be understood and accepted by the target language readers. For example, when translating local novels, the translator may need to adopt the alienated translation strategy.

CONCLUSION

This work (report of the translation practice) explores the process of translating cultural value and spiritual core of folk opera character paper-cuts accurately into the target language, with the framework provided by Professor Li from the perspective of its form language, color language and artistic characteristics. It focuses on the accurate and literary translation of the original work by combining the special historical background and cultural psychology of Shanxi Province, and becomes the task of translators to spread the opera character paper-cuts in Xinjiang area of Shanxi to the outside world. Therefore, we should keep brushing up our knowledge of Shanxi culture and spread them to the outside world.

In the practice of translation, the student translator encountered challenges due to insufficient understanding of the original text, limited range of knowledge, and unfamiliarity with specific stylistic translations. Firstly, when translating the original text, the translator lacked a thorough understanding of certain words with Chinese characteristics and directly translate them based on their literal meanings without considering language differences. Therefore, improving the command of both English and Chinese is a task for the translator during her career life. Secondly, the translator possesses limited knowledge which hampers her ability to fully grasp background information during opera translation processes resulting in disruptions and unnatural contextual connections that impact both speed and quality of translations. It is necessary for the translator to learn in different fields for qualified

translation in the future. Lastly, translators must also pay attention to specific translation of different types of writings; for instance, poetry translations should emphasize rhythm. While ensuring accurate transmission of meaning is crucial in such cases, translators should endeavor to present readers with captivating rhythmic beauty so as to enable target language readers better appreciate the charm of Chinese poems.

This translation practice has helped the student translator to understand what translation really is, how challenging the work can be and how extensive a translator's knowledge reserve should be. Furthermore, it has strengthened the translator's cultural confidence, improved her awareness of cross-cultural communication and reminded her that there is still a long way ahead of her to effectively spreading excellent Chinese culture to the world.

Acknowledgements

This paper is a phased achievement of the research project supported by Shanxi Provincial Philosophy and Social Science Planning Office: *Research on Multimodal Spreading of Shanxi Anti-corruption Opera Culture (2022YY143)*

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