

Original Paper

A Study on the English Translation of *Pipa Song* from the Perspective of Transknowletology

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Abstract

The construction of knowledge-based translation combines "theory knowledge" and "translaology", creating a new paradigm of translation theory in China. From the perspective of transknowletology, knowledge is the foundation of translation activity and the essence of translation, and translation is to translate the "knowledge" contained in the original language. Therefore, translation involves the problem of knowledge shift. As a representative of ancient Chinese poetry, Pipa Song is highly accomplished in the realms of both literature and artistry. Professor Xu Yuanchong's translations of imagery, meter, rhetoric, and cultural knowledge in "Pipa Song" hold significant reference value and offer profound guidance. Taking the English version of Pipa Song as an example, this paper analyzes the knowledge turn in Chinese poetry translation from the perspective of transknowletology, so as to deeply understand the importance and value of transknowletology in poetry translation. It provides new ideas and methods for improving the quality and level of poetry translation, so as to spread Chinese culture better.

Keywords

Transknowletology, Poetry translation, Pipa Song, Cultural transmission

1. Introduction

Pipa Song is one of Tang Dynasty poet Bai Juyi's long Yuefu poems, which is the essence of Chinese classical literature. The poem is ingenious in conception, exquisite in language, and has a high artistic achievement. The poem contains a large number of artistic conception and the pipa vocal music description. In addition, the poem uses a variety of rhetorical devices to show the pipa player's superb skills and tragic circumstances, and expresses the poet's sorrow and resentment for being a reduced person in the end of the world. Poetry contains the integration of artistic conception, vocal music and rhetoric, and the poet uses the sence to express his emotions. How to translate poetry well is the key to

reproducing the imagery, context, and idea of the original poem. Transknowletology takes the translation of knowledge and the knowledge of translation as its main research object. Knowledge translatology believes that translation is a cultural behavior and social practice of cross-language knowledge processing, reconstruction and re-transmission between local knowledge and global knowledge. The construction of knowledge translation studies combines "knowledge theory" with "translation studies" and starts a new paradigm of Chinese translation theory. From the perspective of knowledge translatology, knowledge is the foundation of translation and the essence of translation. Translation involves rendering the "knowledge" contained within the source language. To control the translation of "knowledge" in the translation process, the translator must have a deep understanding of the image knowledge, rhythm knowledge and rhetoric knowledge contained in the pipa lines. For the English translation of poetry, the application of Transknowletology will provide the translator with a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding. Make the translation result more expressive and artistic. Only by utilizing knowledge in Transknowletology can we better convey the original ideas in the process of transforming local knowledge into global knowledge, so as to help target language readers better understand Chinese culture.

2. Overview of Transknowletology

2.1 Knowledge View in Transknowletology

Professor Yang Feng first proposed the concept of Transknowletology in 2021, and explored the relationship between knowledge and translation, which is fundamentally a question: whether knowledge exists in translation, or translation exists in knowledge, or the two are mutually complementary. Finally, it is concluded that knowledge is not only the existence of translation, but also the purpose of translation. Knowledge is both the theory and the method of translation (Yang Feng, 2021). Knowledge and translation are integrated in Transknowletology. Since then, Transknowletology, a new translation theory, has garnered the attention and research of many scholars. Knowledge translatology focuses on the elements of knowledge and changes the situation that scholars must discuss culture when they discuss translation. Transknowletology generalizes knowledge as the product of all material and spiritual cultures (Lan Hongjun, 2022). Therefore, culture is essentially knowledge, but knowledge expands the scope that culture can reach. "Knowledge is the experience of the world acquired by people in life practice, which constitutes the conscious, symbolized and structured information tool for people's survival needs and life accumulation" (Yang Feng, 2022). Kant said that knowledge is a function of human existence.

Knowledge, as a spiritual thing, is communicated or passed on to the next generation and even to the broader group with the help of certain language forms or materialized into some form of labor products, thus becoming a shared spiritual wealth of humanity. Knowledge involves both tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge realization, forming a continuous process.

As for the types of knowledge, according to the degree of dominance, knowledge can be divided into

tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge. Tacit knowledge is something we know deep down in our hearts, but that is elusive. Because each individual cognitive schema is different, it is difficult for us to detect or capture, and it is extremely complex. It is thus largely unconscious and the results are difficult to manifest (Blosch, 2000). Explicit knowledge, by contrast, is something that can be recorded and shared. Tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge exist opposite, and there is no difference between them (Burgin, 2003). Tacit knowledge can be possessed by itself, whereas explicit knowledge must depend on tacit understanding and tacit application. It can be said that all knowledge is either implicit or rooted in tacit knowledge. According to the categories of subjects, knowledge translatology believes that knowledge can be divided into three categories: knowledge of natural sciences, knowledge of social sciences and knowledge of humanities. Some philosophers also distinguish between descriptive or declarative or propositional knowledge (so-called "know-that") and operational or procedural knowledge (so-called "know-how").

After understanding the classification of knowledge, we need to understand the function of knowledge. It is knowledge that enables human beings to have effective tools and powerful weapons in the process of understanding the world and transforming the world. It is also the power of knowledge that promotes the continuous innovation and development of the natural sciences, social sciences and humanities, promotes the constant search for truth, and promotes the constant exchange and dissemination of knowledge between different languages and cultures. Transknowletology holds that the locality of knowledge is the essence and the world of knowledge is the purport. The localization of knowledge can be revealed by translation, and the world can be realized by translation. Through translation, the basic elements of knowledge in different places are continuously coordinated, and the local knowledge and the global knowledge realize dialogue, interaction and change. Knowledge translatology emphasizes knowledge understanding, knowledge transfer and knowledge transmission, and analyzes the practice and experience of how different languages select, process and transform different knowledge (Yang Feng, 2021). Knowledge transliteration aims to provide ideas for the accumulation and transfer of knowledge in different disciplines. It is necessary to consider the role of cultural, social and political factors in the production and dissemination of knowledge. Under the guidance of this theory, English translation of poetry should pay attention to the language conversion between Chinese and English, and how to convey a series of excellent traditional Chinese poetry culture such as the beauty of artistic conception, rhythm and rhetoric conveyed in poetry to foreign readers through translation, which will reproduce and shape the types of discourse suitable for foreign readers, rebuild local knowledge and globalize it.

2.2 Knowledge Transformation in Transknowletology

According to Transknowletology, translation is not merely a transfer from one language to another, nor a simple exchange of information between two languages. It is a cultural act and social practice that involves the selection, processing, reconstruction and retransmission of different knowledge carried by different languages, that is, knowledge construction in essence. Therefore, we can see that knowledge

translatology emphasizes the transfer and transformation of knowledge elements in the process of translation, and pays attention to the integration of truth, goodness and beauty in the process of knowledge transformation. According to the characteristics of the target language and culture, translators need to flexibly use various translation strategies and methods to realize the transformation of knowledge. For example, for the cultural knowledge transformation, we can use the transformation and representation of cultural metaphor to transform knowledge of intonation. We can pay attention to the transformation of the phonetic characteristics of the source language and the prosodic expression of the target language. According to knowledge translation studies, if the translation does not realize the transformation of local knowledge into global knowledge, it is easy to cause "knowledge scissors difference" and "knowledge escape" (Zhang Baoguo, 2023).

In the process of poetry translation, translators should pay more attention to the knowledge transformation in poetry, avoid the knowledge gap in the translation, and make the translation a form of "knowledge interaction", that is, a dynamic process of "knowledge interaction", the mutual transformation of local knowledge and global knowledge, so as to align the translation of poetry more closely with the aesthetic habits and cultural background of readers in the target language.

In short, from the perspective of knowledge transliteration, poetry translation is a cross-linguistic, cross-cultural, cross-ideological and cross-aesthetic process, as well as a way and means to analyze, deconstruct and reorganize knowledge and finally obtain worldwide knowledge (Yang Yongling, 2023).

3. *Pipa Song* and Its English Translation

As an important form of ancient Chinese literature, Chinese poetry boasts a brilliant history and a rich diversity of styles. It is famous for its refined and concise language expression and unique rhythmic structure. Chinese poetry often expresses the poet's inner feelings and observations of the world through language through the rendering of images and the way of expressing emotions. At the same time, Chinese poetry also pays attention to the creation of artistic conception, the pursuit of artistic beauty and musical rhythm. In traditional Chinese culture, poetry is regarded as an elegant art form, which not only inherits the wisdom of the ancients, but also displays the unique charm of Chinese culture.

Pipa Song is one of the representative works of Bai Juyi, poet of the Tang Dynasty. He skillfully uses images to describe the sound and form of pipa music, and combines the fate of the pipa player with the rhythm of the pipa, creating a stark contrast and a vivid sense of imagery. First of all, these images not only give the poetry the beauty of music, but also add drama and influence; Secondly, the use of rhythm skillfully, through the cadence of the sentence pattern and rhythm, so that the poetry has a pleasant sense of rhythm; At the same time, various rhetorical devices are used to enhance the artistry and expression of poetry.

Knowledge translatology advocates for the conveyance of the true essence of knowledge. It suggests that excellent translations should take into account social psychology and user convenience, to help

readers see the original and advocate the expression of beauty based on the target language's aesthetics is also to introduce the original (Yue Feng, 2022).

First of all, "truth" emphasizes the accuracy and authenticity of knowledge. When studying the English translation of Chinese poetry, we should pay attention to the accuracy and integrity of syntax and semantics, so as to accurately convey the original knowledge. Secondly, with regard to "genuine", since poetry contains rich traditional Chinese culture, history and social background, translators must take into account the cultural background and knowledge of target readers in the translation process, so as to ensure that the translation is easy to understand and close to the knowledge of target readers (Meng Xiangchun, 2022). Finally, the "beauty" principle of knowledge translation studies pursues the aesthetic feeling of the translation, and the translator needs to choose the appropriate expression methods and cultural symbols to make the translation achieve aesthetic pleasure and expressiveness.

Therefore, this paper selects Xu Yuanchong's translation of *Pipa Song* and Yang Xianyi as the object of analysis, analyzes from four aspects: imagery knowledge transformation, meter knowledge transformation, rhetorical knowledge transformation and culture knowledge transformation, and focuses on the knowledge transformation in the transformation process between the source language and the target language. This paper discusses how to transform Chinese poetry translation from local knowledge into world knowledge and realize the integration of true knowledge, genuine knowledge and beautiful knowledge.

4. Case Analysis of *Pipa Song*

4.1 Imagery Knowledge Transformation

Poetry is a kind of literary genre with lyric expression and aspiration. Every word conveys emotion and meaning. However, due to the different historical background and social culture between China and the West, it is difficult to express the deep connotation carried by the highly condensed language in the process of poetry translation. There is a lot of image in poetry translation, which refers to the reproduction of the original poem's artistic conception. The first problem in translating Tang poetry is to convey the original poem's "beauty of meaning". Because poets use images to express their thoughts and emotions, how can translators translate the image knowledge in poetry to the target language readers, so as to retain the beauty of artistic conception expressed in the original poem while keeping the consistency between the deep and surface layers of the original text? In the process of translation, the translation of image knowledge has become a major difficulty. If the images in the poem cannot be translated, the main emotions of the poem cannot be expressed. Such dissemination of "local knowledge" would be meaningless.

Example 1:

ST: 浔阳江头夜送客，枫叶荻花秋瑟瑟。

TT: One night by riverside I bade a friend goodbye,

In maple leaves and rushes autumn seemed to sigh;

The first two sentences introduce people, places, times and events. In the autumn night, poet went to the head of the Xunyang River to see off the guests. The autumn evening wind blew the silver flowers and maple leaves, making the sound of "rustling". The melancholy of parting became more and more desolate by the bleak autumn scenery. The poet expresses his feeling of loneliness with the sight of flowers and trees fading. "瑟瑟" describes the sound of maple trees and reeds being blown by the autumn wind. From the perspective of the image knowledge contained in the surface, "枫叶荻花秋瑟瑟" depicts the cold scenery by the river in the autumn night, while the deep meaning symbolizes the sadness of leaving, so it is translated into the special surface and deepens the surface of the original poem. Through knowledge transformation, readers of the target language can also appreciate the deep image knowledge, and achieve functional equivalence between the target language and the source language. It can be said that such translation achieves the spread of "worldwide knowledge". At the same time, Professor Xu Yuanchong, neither confined to the rhetoric of the original poem nor out of the artistic conception of the original poem, pursued the beauty of the meaning of the translation, and translated "秋瑟瑟" as "autumn seemed to sigh" by means of anthropomorphic technique, as if autumn was also sighing (Xu Yuanchong, 2006). You can also appreciate the bleak feeling brought by the autumn, and the sadness of leaving the paper has laid a depressing and bleak emotional tone for the whole poem.

Example 2:

ST: 别时茫茫江浸月。

TT: The moonbeams blended with water when we were to part.

By describing the role of the moon imagery, the poem side-stepped the poet's parting sorrow, by feeling the tragic fate of the pipa girl at the same time, but also the poet's own bleak life. When translating, it is important to translate the deeper meaning expressed by the knowledge of the imagery in the poem, otherwise, the translation would be akin to losing the soul of the poem. In Example 1, moonlight and moonbeam are used to denote moonlight, while Professor Xu Yuanchong uses moonlight. In fact, the main difference lies in the intensity and range of the light they refer to moonbeam generally refers to a beam of light from the moon, and is often used to describe a beam of light formed when moonlight passes through clouds or obstacles, giving people a soft, hazy feeling. It is often described as a ray of moonlight and is often used in literature and poetry to create a romantic or mystical atmosphere. Moonlight, however, emphasises the moonlight itself, the extent and intensity of the moonlight, and is generally used to describe the area illuminated by the moonlight or the scene under the moonlight. In order to fit the context better, the translator uses 'moonbeams' to convey the image of moonlight on the river, which pushes the emotion of parting to a climax and vividly conveys the imagery in the original poem. The target readers can have similar emotional resonance with the original poem. The translation of the moon imagery in the original poem achieves functional equivalence between the target language and the source language, and it can be said that such a translation achieves the dissemination of global knowledge.

3.2 Meter Knowledge Transformation

Metre refers to the musical effect produced by sound, rhyme and rhythm in poetry (Xu Yuanchong, 2005). It is a special form of expression of poetic language, which gives poems a unique sense of rhythm and beauty through the skilful use of tones and rhymes. In *Pipa Song*, the poet's use of iambic pentameter and rhyme gives the poem a melodious sense of rhythm, which echoes the theme and emotion of the poem and provides readers with an immersive audio-visual experience. Translators need to be aware of the fact that the realisation of the poem's implicit knowledge of meter needs to be shifted towards the use of diction and a range of onomatopoeia.

Example 3: 大弦嘈嘈如急雨，小弦切切如私语。

TT: The thick strings loudly thrummed like the pattering rain;

The fine strings softly tinkled in a murmuring strain.

First, the onomatopoeia "嘈嘈" is used above to describe a low, heavy sound that corresponds to a large string that sounds like rain. The same onomatopoeia "切切" describes a light and delicate sound, and corresponds to the small strings that sound like "whispers".

The original poem is neatly paired, transforming an abstract auditory feeling into an intuitive visual feeling, and together they express the skillful movement, which is accomplished in a single breath. At the same time, the heaviness and urgency of the sound of the lute also expresses the unspeakable bitterness of the pipa woman and the author, who are eager to burst out. Therefore, in order to emphasize the rhythmic beauty of the original poem, Xu Yuanchong translated "loudly thrummed" as "嘈嘈", which describes the sound of one finger plucking several strings at the same time, and it is often used in playing the guitar. The translation of "切切" as "softly tinkled" imitates the sound of "叮当叮当" (tinkling) to realize the transformation of the knowledge of meter. We can find the original "大弦" to "小弦"; "嘈嘈" to "切切"; "急雨" to "私语"; "the thick strings" to "The fine strings"; "loudly thrummed" to "softly tinkled"; "rain" to "strain". The whole line reads in end-rhyme and has a distinctive musical quality. The structure of the entire poem is neat and symmetrical, with antithetical balance and a strong sense of rhythm. It can be seen that Xu Yuanchong accurately matches the original text with the target text by means of imitation translation, and at the same time enables the target readers to clearly understand the connotation of the original text's phonetic knowledge, thus achieving the beauty of sound and realizing the transformation of phonetic knowledge.

Example 4:

ST: 银瓶乍破水浆迸，铁骑突出刀枪鸣。

TT: Then a silver bottle is smashed, out gushes the water, suddenly we heard water burst a silver jar.

The language of this poem is vivid, and the sound of the pipa is extremely beautiful, such as "银瓶乍破", "水浆迸", such as "铁骑突出，刀枪轰鸣", and pushes the undercurrent of "凝绝" to a climax, enabling people to feel the music charm of the heart-stopping and thrilling. This is the climax of the dark current of the "Condensation", which makes people feel the charm of the music which is heart-rending and thrilling. This sentence describes the climax of the music after a short pause suddenly

burst, "suddenly" and the original "乍" corresponds to the meaning of suddenly, in pronunciation is also very similar to the original. The verb "burst" expresses "水迸", while "鸣" is expressed by "clsah". In order to pursue the "phonetic beauty" of the translation, Prof. Xu makes use of the expression "come from afar" in a unique way, in an attempt to echo the "jar" in the previous sentence.

3.3 Rhetorical Knowledge Transformation

Pipa Song utilizes a large number of rhetorical devices, such as explicit metaphor, borrowing, topical truth, and intricacy, etc., and has a neatly written counterpoint. Due to the special nature of Chinese poetry, there are specific requirements for the number of lines and words. And there are great differences between Chinese and English in terms of sentence style and syntax. When translating, the translator has to maintain the consistency between the target language and the source language in terms of form at the same time, he has to skillfully translate the rhetorical devices used in the poems, which is a great test of the translator's linguistic skills. Under the perspective of knowledge translation, translators should pay special attention to the transformation of rhetorical knowledge in the process of translating poems into English in order to reproduce the beauty of rhetorical knowledge in the poems.

Example 5:

ST: 我闻琵琶已叹息，又闻此语重唧唧。

TT: Listening to her sad music, I sighed with pain;

Hearing her story, I signed again and again.

Whenever repetition, couplet, prose, or other language that can have a neat form and a common lexical surface is said to have a varied form and a different lexical surface, we call it intricate. The use of intricate rhetoric avoids monotony and flatness. One of the ways to constitute intricacy is by switching word surfaces. Here, "唧唧" refers to the sound of sighing, which constitutes a synthesis with "叹息" in the previous sentence. The word "重" refers to the meaning of "again". The poet has been lonely since his relegation to the government, and the pipa is not yet finished, so the poet is still sighing, but when he heard the pipa girl lamenting her life, he felt sympathy for her, and sighed again and again.

Prof. Xu Yuanhong translates "已叹息" and "重唧唧" as "sighed with pain" and "sighed again and again" respectively. The use of the word "sigh" twice not only expresses the meaning accurately, but also reflects the use of intricate rhetoric and realizes the turn of rhetorical knowledge. Moreover, the use of the word "deepen" adds a little bit of sorrow to the poet's deep emotion. In these two lines, the music and situation of the pipa girl and the poet's ups and downs echo each other, which naturally reminds people of the poet's depression and bitterness that has accumulated in his heart since he was demoted from his official post and the tragic fate of the songstresses in the feudal society, thus reflecting the broad social nature of the original content of the poem.

Example 6:

ST: 曲终收拨当心画，四弦一声如裂帛。

TT: She made a central T sweep when the music was ending;

The four strings made one sound, as of silk one is rending.

The term "当心画" refers to the use of a plectrum to cross the four strings in the middle of the pipa, a right-handed technique commonly used at the end of a piece of music. Here, Prof. Xu Yuanchong has added the subject "She" to make the text flow smoothly and the meaning clear. The roar of the four strings seems to have torn the cloth, and although the song has ended, the aftermath of the song lingers in the heart. The original poem adopts an explicit metaphor, using "如" as the metaphor. In the translation, Professor Xu Yuanchong also rigorously translates this simile from "如" to "as". This literal translation achieves the beauty of form, which not only vividly and intuitively shows the skilled skills of the pipa player, but also leaves a broad aftertaste space for the reader.

3.4 Cultural Knowledge Transformation

Culture is specific knowledge, and with the accumulation of knowledge, culture is in turn developed and passed on. Each country or nation has its own unique development history and lifestyle environment, which has formed unique cultural terms different from those of other countries. Under knowledge translation studies, the cultural knowledge explored here refers specifically to the culture unique to Chinese society. There are several culturally loaded terms in the Pipa Song, which should be emphasized in the translation to ensure the dynamic transformation of local knowledge and global knowledge.

Example 7:

ST: 银瓶乍破水浆迸。

TT: Suddenly we heard water burst a silver jar.

Because in China, a "bottle" (瓶) is a container without a handle. Its mouth is much thinner than the body of the bottle, and it can be corked with a bottle cap, which is a common bottle used by the Chinese to hold water. However, in Western countries, "罐子" (jar) is always used to hold water. The jar is a four-square container with a handle and a large neck. In order for foreign readers to understand that "瓶子" in the original language means a container for water, it is translated as jar to bridge the cultural gap and preserve the meaning of the original language to the greatest extent possible.

Example 8:

ST: 妆成每被秋娘妒。

TT: My beauty was envied by songstresses fair still.

In the Tang Dynasty, "秋娘" was known as a singer or dancer, which is a positive term. The word "songstress" meaning singer or choir also has a positive connotation (Yu Yuanchong, 2005). Since Westerners know little about Chinese culture, they may think that "qiu niang" is a derogatory term. Therefore, Xu translated "秋娘" as "songstress" to express his appreciation for female singers such as pipa players. In this way, the meaning of the original text is copied exactly.

5. Summary

As the essence of Chinese traditional culture, Tang poetry has high literary value and artistic charm, and plays an important role in spreading Chinese cultural knowledge. Translation is one of the ways to

realize cultural transmission and tell Chinese stories well. For poetry itself, translation is the embodiment of knowledge value in different contexts. Knowledge translatology breaks through traditional translation theories, combines translatology with knowledge, emphasizes knowledge transformation in the process of translation, and realizes the equivalence of target language knowledge and source language knowledge. By analyzing the translation of *Pipa Song* by, this paper analyzes four aspects: image knowledge transformation, knowledge turn, rhetoric knowledge transformation and cultural knowledge transformation between the target language and the source language. Finally, in the translation of poetry, we should not only make the target language and the source language equal in form, but also make the target language and the source language equal in image, rhythm, rhetoric, culture knowledge. Only in this way can we truly transform local knowledge to global knowledge and provide some references for literary translation practice at the same time.

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