

Cultural Awareness in Translating Cultural and Creative Industries in the Context of Intercultural Communication

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[Abstract] The cultural and creative industries play a unique and essential role in intercultural communication in the context of globalization. China has accumulated profound cultural sediment with five thousand years of history and more than fifty minorities that provide a solid foundation for the development of cultural and creative industries in China. However there are problems in the translation of texts in cultural and creative industries, which have been barriers for intercultural communication and the development of these industries. *Impression Liu Sanjie* is a musical performance that conveys a creative artistic conception of harmony between man and nature. This article uses *Impression Liu Sanjie* as an example to illustrate the significance of cultural awareness in translating texts of cultural and creative industries to extend the depth of intercultural communication, to highlight its spiritual and humanistic value, to enhance the interest, appeal, and influence of the cultural and creative industries in the context of globalization.

[Keywords] cultural and creative industries; cultural awareness; intercultural translation; cultural awareness in literature

Introduction

With the development of the economy and technology and the improvement in the standard of living, the cultural and creative industries have become increasingly important in various aspects. The cultural and creative industries play a unique and essential role in intercultural communication in the context of globalization.

Cultural and Creative Industries

The terms “cultural industries” and “creative industries” have been investigated richly in the literature by researchers (O’Conner, 1999; Towse, 2000; Cunningham, 2001; Flew, 2002; Hesmondhalgh, 2002; Hesmondhalgh & Pratt, 2005). According to a UNESCO definition, cultural industries combine the creation, production, and distribution of goods and services that are cultural in nature and usually protected by intellectual property rights (2014). Creative industries refers to a range of economic activities that are concerned with the generation or exploitation of knowledge and information. They may variously, also, be referred to as the *cultural industries* (Hesmondhalgh, 2002, p. 14) or the *creative economy* (Howkins, 2001). Howkins’ creative economy comprises advertising, architecture, art, crafts, design, fashion, film, music, performing arts, publishing, R&D software, toys and games, TV and radio, and video games (Howkins, 2001, pp.88-117).

The Beijing Statistical Bureau and Chief Investigation Team of National Bureau of Statistics of PRC in Beijing issued the Standards Classifying Beijing Cultural and Creative Industries and defined cultural and creative industries as “the related industries cluster, with creation, production, innovation as the fundamental means, with cultural content and creative products as the core value, with the realization or consumption of intellectual property right as the transaction feature, providing cultural experience for the public” (Beijing Statistical Bureau, 2006). The development of cultural and creative industries depends on individual creativity and talent, which requires culture, technique, and commercialized models to support.

The concept of cultural and creative industries is of great controversy. Zhao Jimin (2011) holds the view that cultural industries and creative industries are generalizations of the industries from different perspectives with different foci, and cultural industries are the generalization from the perspective of

consumption, while creative industries are from the perspective of production.

Cultural and creative industries are more than a concept nowadays; they play an extremely important role in the contribution to the GDP made by industries based on innovation and rapid growth in productivity. The creative industries have become increasingly important to economic well-being; proponents suggest that “human creativity is the ultimate economic resource,” (Florida, 2002, p. xiii) The production value of the cultural and creative industries in USA has increased by 14% since 2002 and has contributed more than 30% to the GDP. The production value of the cultural and creative industries in China increased by 20% and reached 1.6 trillion Yuan in 2012; the production value may reach 2.1 trillion Yuan in 2013 and account for 3.77% of the GDP (Ying, 2014).

The Essential Role of Cultural and Creative Industries in Intercultural Communication

Cultural and creative industries, as an essential part of the market economy, contribute to the improvement of national economic power; as modern industries with culture as the core, they carry on the spiritual crystallization of a nation, bring ethnic cultures to the world, preserve the diversity of cultures, and improve the image and appeal of a nation. Cultural and creative industries introduce cultures to audiences through entertaining activities, which helps the audience develop a vivid understanding of the cultures in amusement so that the intercultural communication will be achieved more smoothly, and the values and beliefs could be understood better, which exerts imperceptible influence on the audience.

Cultural Awareness in Intercultural Communication

“Culture awareness” was originally advanced by Fei Xiaotong, a great professor and socialist, in The Second Advanced Seminar on Social and Cultural Anthropology held by Peking University in 1997. According to Professor Fei (1997), cultural awareness means people living in a certain cultural and historical environment have a clear understanding of their culture, the course of the development of the culture, and its future orientation. Someone with cultural awareness means that he develops active reflection on the strengths and weaknesses of the culture and realizes the value and significance, as well as the defects, of the culture he is living in. Cultural awareness is an arduous course of cognition--only when one develops a thorough understanding of his own culture and learns different kinds of cultures, is it possible for him to identify the value and defects of his culture; thus, he could learn the strengths from other cultures and develop the fundamental principles so that the cultures could coexist and cooperate with each other and harmonize (Fei, 1997).

The understanding of one’s culture and other cultures includes the understanding of the languages, which are carriers of cultures. Chinese and English belong to typical high-context cultures and low-context cultures, respectively, with different features. Katan (2006, pp. 60-61) has developed a cluster to compare the features of high-context culture and low-context culture.

Low-Context Culture	High-Context Culture
Text (explicitness)	Context (implicitness)
Information (facts)	Communication (feelings, opinions)
Low information load (small chunks)	High information load (large chunks)
KISS (keep it short and simple)	KILC (keep it long and complete)
Reader friendly (peer/peer)	Writer-oriented (expert/non-expert)

The features of the languages are an indispensable part of cultural awareness, which provide guidelines for translators in cultural and creative industries. Cultural awareness is neither being ethnocentric nor to be self-denying, but reflective on one’s own culture and realizing its strengths and weaknesses so that the position and value of the culture is highlighted; different cultures could learn from each other to offset the weaknesses. As a result, misunderstanding and cultural conflicts would be avoided, and intercultural communication could be achieved, which would lead to the harmonious development of cultures and the world. Translation is a typical activity of intercultural communication that requires the translator’s

cultural awareness to achieve dialogue between cultures. A translator's cultural awareness is particularly significant in translating texts of cultural and creative industries.

The Translation of *Impression Liu Sanjie*

The translation of texts of cultural and creative industries is still in the pioneering stage. As a result of its complexity, there are quite a number of problems in the translation of texts in cultural and creative industries, which have brought misunderstanding of cultures, barriers for intercultural communication, and the development of the industries. However, studies on translation of cultural and creative industries are remarkably rare. The author checked CNKI with cultural and creative industries and translation as the key words in title and found only two articles, which are quite brief and fail to highlight the features of cultural and creative industries in terms of communication. This paper takes *Impression Liu Sanjie*, the highly recognized and distinguished live performer, as an example to analyze the significance of cultural awareness in translating Chinese texts of cultural and creative industries into English.

Impression Liu Sanjie, directed by Zhang Yimou, is the first live performance with mountains and rivers as the stage, with the local culture and customs as the core, and the local villagers as the actors and actresses. Liu Sanjie is a fairy of songs in the folk story in the Zhuang nationality, and the live performance *Impression Liu Sanjie* integrates the beauty of the mountains and rivers with the folk songs, dances and ethnic customs presented by the local villagers nearby. The performance is the creation of human being and nature. The officials of World Tourism Organization said after watching the performance that it is a performance an audience could not appreciate elsewhere but in Guilin, and it is worth buying round trip ticket from anywhere just to watch the performance (Baiké, 2011). The performance reflects the typical characteristics of cultural and creative industries—spirituality, creativity, use of advanced technology, and value extensibility.

Most inbound tourist cannot read Chinese, so the question becomes how to help the tourists who are not familiar with Chinese culture develop a better understanding of the essence of the profound Chinese culture. The translation of the introduction text is a decisive factor. Let's take "The Prelude," Red Impression, and Green Impression, as examples to analyze and illustrate the problems in translation.

The Prelude

Legend of the scenery

Singing folk songs, you asking, I am answering the folk
songs are as clear and intelligent as the water and tells you
a beautiful legend.

The wind comes over, and the clouds flying Sanjie Liu,
a spirit of songs, is in everywhere among the river and the mountains.

The prelude reflects the essential features of Duige and the connection between this fairy of songs and the local rivers and mountains. However, the translator of the text lacks cultural awareness, which brings problems in translation. In terms of perspective, the text is not reader-oriented. The translator neglects the needs and background of the audience. The Chinese text was originally written for a Chinese audience, who are quite familiar with Chinese culture; while the translated text readers, being ignorant of the ethnic custom Duige, lack the background information of the intelligent and resourceful fairy of songs Liu Sanjie, and they know very little of the traditional Chinese concept that "the unique features of a local environment always give special characteristics to its inhabitants," which reflects the charm of Chinese culture that foreigners are eager to understand. "Singing folk songs, you asking, I am answering" fails to describe the ethnic custom--Duige effectively. "The folk songs are as clear and intelligent as the water" and "Sanjie Liu, a spirit of songs, is in everywhere among the river and the mountains" fail to convey the connection between the songs, the spirit of songs, and the rivers and mountains. The word "scenery" is too general, which fails to reflect the folk people's affection for the mountains and rivers. The translator fails to convey the cultural connotation effectively. In terms of content, the translated text is supposed to

offer more information and facts and do more than just create the atmosphere of Duige. In terms of language, there is a problem in collocation in intelligent and songs—"songs are as clear and intelligent"; furthermore, there are problems in composition.

Thus, translators are supposed to have profound cultural awareness, to be proud of Chinese culture, have a thorough understanding of Chinese culture, and aspire to share the charms and fascination of Chinese culture with the world, which would enable the translator to develop the understanding of text function, the purpose of the text, the characteristics and needs of the audience, and the receiving time, place, and media of the text, to consider the cultural differences, audience differences, and linguistic differences, and try to share the essence of Chinese culture--the only continuous culture with people from all over the world.

Here is the revised version:

Prelude

Legend of the extraordinary mountains and rivers

Songs echoing in the mountains, one falls, another rises...

Folk songs originated from the rivers, sharing their nature,
and evoking a beautiful legend,

Breezes blow, clouds drift;

Liu Sanjie, a spirit of songs, was born midst the extraordinary mountains and rivers.

Red Impression

Folk Songs

This section is based on the legend of Sanjie Lili, the producer bravely combines the songs with the fishing net to form an impression of Duige

(sing songs with the questions in it and asks the other to sing back with the answer).

This section reflects the romance and passion of young people in communicating admiration and affection to each other by Duige, which is the significant approach for youngsters of ethnic nationalities to open their hearts and look for the beloved one. However, the translated text fails to convey the passion and enthusiasm for lack of information. The part "the fluttering fishing nets and the men in them comprise the flowing melody and the musical notes, which are in correspondence with the melody of Duige" has been omitted by the translator. Without the interpretation, it would be very difficult for the audience to understand the scene in which men are dancing among red stripes. The translator overlooks the needs and background of the audience and omits the part that should be emphasized. Furthermore, the fishing nets are in red, which is the symbol of auspiciousness, prosperity, and passion. The combination of the fluttering red nets with the use of advanced technology creates wonderful sound and light effects and brings the audience to the magic world of Chinese culture through visual and auditory entertainment, which is a valuable opportunity to share Chinese culture with the world; however, the translator gives up the opportunity.

The lack of cultural awareness leads to the failure to highlight the essential features of Duige and the problems in composition, omission, and inappropriate expression. The translator gives up the opportunity to share Chinese culture with the world. The lack of cultural awareness also leads to irresponsibility, and takes the translation of texts of cultural and creative industries as a commercial act, overlooking its meaning in cultural communication and cultural pluralism. The explanation of Duige shows that the translator has considered the audience's background to some extent and anticipated their ignorance of Duige; however, the translation is a bit redundant, which does not conform to the principle of KISS and using small chunks (Katan, 2006, pp.55-80) and needs to be improved.

The following is a revised version offered by the author.

Red Impression

Folk Songs

The directors combine folk songs with fishing nets to depict Duige (communication by singing).

The fluttering red nets are the flowing melody

and the men in the nets are lusty notes, hot as fire.

Green Impression Garden

Sunset clouds, cooking smoke, shepherd boy,
 Washing women, fishing raft all these pictures tell
 you the story of our beautiful homeland.
 The producer brings you the picture of daily life of
 The people in Lijiang River, and through this
 picture, you can understand more about the back-
 ground in which Sanjie Liu was born, and feel the
 beauty of the hometown of folk songs.

The scenes, reproducing the life of people living by the Lijiang River, reflect the simple, quiet, and harmonious living style. This section shows that the Chinese ethnic nationalities respect nature, advocate a simple lifestyle, and carry the beliefs into practice to achieve harmony between man and nature; furthermore, what this section reflects is of universal value and inspires the audience to inspect the side effects brought by the fast-paced living style and high pressure of the modern society, to rethink the side effects of the highly developed economy and technology—pressure, diseases, decline of morals, and consumerism. This part is of profound cultural connotation. However, the translator neglects the value of traditional Chinese beliefs, which could bring inspiration to people in modern society upon the reflection of the essence of life, and overlooks the humanistic value of the section. Second, the translation fails to reflect that it is the mountains and rivers that breed the wonderful folk songs. Third, in terms of language, the translator overlooks the differences between Chinese and English. The Chinese text lists the scenes one by one to create a tranquil atmosphere; however English tends to provide more facts and information; and the latter part of the section is a little redundant, which does not correspond to the principle—"keep it short and simple" and use small chunks (Katan, 2006, pp.55-80).

The author tries to offer a revised version:

Green Impression/ Homeland

In sunset's glow, with smoke from kitchen chimneys, a shepherd boy is returning home,
 Women washing clothes in the brook, fishing boats going home
 All these depict the quiet and harmonious life of local people with nature
 The beautiful homeland of Liu Sanjie, the birthplace of folk songs.

Translation is more than the transmission of language--it is the transmission of culture, and the translator is supposed to convey the rich cultural connotation carried by language to the audience and share the inspiring ideas with the audience. Profound cultural awareness enables the translator to realize the depth of the cultural connotation and recognize the cultural differences, such as linguistic differences and audience differences; thus, the translator would try every possible means to choose the right strategies and approaches to share the precious cultural heritage with people from all over the world to achieve the harmonious development of the world.

Implications and Conclusion

The translation of cultural and creative industries is intercultural communication that involves languages, cultures, societies, psychology, and professional knowledge. Cultural and creative industries include our accumulated experiences--literature translation, drama translation, news translation, scientific and technical translation, trade translation, and what needs to be developed--tourism translation, exhibition translation, film translation, software translation, advertisement translation, website translation, games translation, and so on. As a result of its complexity, translation of texts from cultural and creative industries requires more than one strategy or approach; however, whatever strategy or approach to choose, cultural awareness is the basis.

A Thorough Understanding of Chinese Culture

Cultural awareness is the cornerstone in translating texts in cultural and creative industries. The

translator's understanding of Chinese culture is a vital factor, which determines the effect of intercultural communication. Thus language proficiency is required, while cultural awareness is the cornerstone. With five thousand years of history, Chinese culture is rich and diverse, which requires the translator to exert his or her energy to deepen the understanding of the profound culture in order to highlight the uniqueness and value of Chinese culture. The translator is required to develop an elaborate and in-depth understanding of Chinese culture, to realize the significance and value of Chinese culture, as well as the weaknesses. The translator is not only supposed to accumulate information of Chinese culture, but also to develop his or her affection towards Chinese culture so that he or she would be able to recognize the value of Chinese culture and spare no effort to share it with the world to improve the effectiveness of intercultural communication (Huang, 2011).

The Awareness of the Value of Chinese Culture in the World

The translator is required not only to be familiar with Chinese culture but to develop an understanding of other cultures, so that he or she could identify the value and position of Chinese culture in the world. The understanding of other cultures enables the translator to learn the customs, beliefs, the ways of thinking, perceptive approaches, and psychological characteristics of the target audience from which the translator will develop an effective way to meet the needs and expectations of the target audience and to arouse their curiosity and impress them with the uniqueness of Chinese culture. At the same time, we need to absorb the meritorious values from other cultures.

The translator is required to be sensitive to the culturally loaded words and information, to improve the readability and acceptability of the texts (Li, 2011) so that the audience could be exposed to Chinese culture and be affected so as to appreciate the vivid, appealing description and performance. Thus, the effectiveness of intercultural communication would be improved, and the interest, appeal, and influence of cultural and creative industries would be promoted.

The Interpretation of Chinese Culture with Regard to the Developing Modern Culture

Chinese culture has encountered unprecedented frustration in modern times, and the image of China in some foreigners' minds is quite different from what it is (Men & Zhou, 2011). Thus, translators are required to interpret the vitality and value of Chinese culture from fresh perspectives in the context of the modern culture and society to improve the effectiveness of intercultural communication. What we share with the world are not only goods made in China, but also the dynamic, inspiring, and profound Chinese values and material cultural heritage (Li, 2011). The translators are responsible for re-evaluating the humanistic value of Chinese culture in the perspective of the developing modern culture and sharing the values-- harmony between man and nature, the Golden Mean, harmonious development of cultures and nations, making unceasing effort to improve oneself, nations or states coexist in concord, with the world, and letting the world hear the sound from China, understand Chinese culture, and remove the misunderstanding about China.

The Understanding of Different Features of Relevant Languages

Language is closely related to culture; language and culture are interwoven. The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis states that language is not simply a way of voicing ideas, but it is the very thing, which shapes the ideas. SWH holds the view that the differences in language reflect the different views of different people. "Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society" (Sapir, 1958, p. 69). Thus, translators are required to study the languages not only from linguistic views, but also to learn the results of studies from various fields, such as culture, psychology, sociology, anthropology, and so on, so that they can develop a better and clearer understanding of the features of relevant languages and improve the effectiveness of intercultural communication.

Furthermore, the translator is supposed to realize his or her dynamic role in intercultural

communication as a subject, and that his or her initiatives exert impact to the effect of intercultural communication. Culture has become a stage, and various political, ideological powers struggle in the arena (Said, 2011, p.4). The translator shoulders the responsibility of sharing the essence of Chinese culture with the world, preserving the diversity of cultures, promoting the soft power of China, and propelling the harmonious development of cultures. The translator should not only accumulate the knowledge of relevant cultures and languages, but also develop affection toward Chinese culture and enthusiasm to share the essence of Chinese culture with the world; doing so will improve the effect of intercultural communication. In a word, the translator is supposed to develop the cultural awareness in terms of knowledge and emotion, and behavior.

After several thousand years of history, human beings have developed different cultures resulting in natural environment, history, and customs. History has taught us that dialogue and communication of cultures are the effective approaches to achieve harmonious development in spite of the differences and disagreements. Only when we respect other cultures while realizing the value of our own culture and allowing the diversity of cultures, can we benefit from each other, share the essence of cultures, and achieve “Harmony, yet without uniformity.” As Professor Fei Xiaotong (1997) advocated, “we are supposed to develop our strengths, to learn from others’ strengths, to complement each other’s advantages, finally to achieve the harmonious development of the world.” Cultural awareness is the cornerstone of developing the depth of intercultural communication to highlight its spiritual and humanistic value and enhance the interest, appeal and influence of the cultural and creative industries in the context of globalization.

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