

## On Features of Chinese Artistic Texts and the Caused Difficulties to the

### Revision

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*Abstract: With the deepening of cultural exchanges between different countries, there is a great demand for the translation of Chinese artistic texts, but there is little research on the translation and revision of artistic texts. Based on the artistic texts that the author has revised, this paper summarizes the "Three Features" of artistic texts, and the "Three Difficulties" caused by these features, and finally puts forward corresponding solutions based on practical examples.*

*Keywords: Translation and Revision; Artistic Text; Features; Revision Difficulties.*

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

With the deepening of China's foreign exchanges, translation, as a bridge of cross-cultural communication, is becoming more and more important. And revision, as a part of the translation process, is an important step to improve the translation quality before the completion of translation. However, the quantity revision teams in the market is small and quality is far from good. <sup>[1]</sup> In terms of Although some people have studied the work of translation revision, few focus on the revision of certain kind of text, especially artistic texts. In the past year, the author has proofread and revised many artistic texts and summarized the features and difficulties in revising these texts with examples.

### 2. DEFINITION OF ART

Referring to many dictionaries, the author has found that Concise Dictionary of Fine Arts gives a clearer and more specific definition of "art". It is quoted as follows: "Art is a special form of thought that reflects reality with images and is more typical than reality. It includes literature, painting, sculpture, architecture, music, dance, drama, film, quyi and so on. Art can be divided into four types according to its modes of expression : (1) linguistic art, such as literature, criticism, speech, etc.; (2) Plastic arts, such as painting, sculpture, architecture, etc.; (3) Sound art, such as instrumental music, vocal music, ventriloquism, etc.; (4) Performing arts, such as drama, dance, film, etc. If divided according to the senses, the above four kinds of art can be called thought art, visual art, auditory art and visual and auditory art respectively. "<sup>[2]</sup>

The artistic texts discussed in this paper is an overall concept, which are not subdivided into literary art, painting art, music art or other, and the difficulties summarized are the common difficulties of all these artistic texts.

### 3. DIFFICULTIES OF REVISING ARTISTIC TEXTS

To sum up the difficulties in revising artistic texts, we first need to analyze and summarize the differences between art texts and general texts.

After comparing a series of artistic texts with other types of texts, the author has found some special the features of artistic texts and summarize them into "Three Features":(1) high professionalism; (2) high paratactic level; (3) rich in culture

#### 3.1 High Professionalism.

Artistic texts are used to describe the cause, process, and development of art. Therefore, a lot of professional words and vocabularies would be seen in the text, which are hard to understand if the translator have little knowledge of this area.

For example, the techniques used in Chinese paintings like“Goule, Dianran, xuanran, jimo”are so unique in the realm of Western art, therefore, are hard to translate to English without losing its original meaning.

#### 3.2 High Paratactic Level.

Chinese is a paratactic language while English is a hypotactic language. Besides, artistic texts are full of Chinese culture, so it has a higher paratactic level, which means conjunctions can seldom be seen in text and its logic between sentences are reflected in meaning. Readers should understand the logic by reading between lines. This makes it hard to understand and hard to translate.

For example: the sentence “另一种是无物象 (non-objective)、非具象 (non-figurative) 的抽象, 他的图像完全来自内部世界, 来自内视觉, 如意念产生的幻觉、旋律引起的联觉, 像神智学 (theosophism) 那样, 或像康定斯基那样, 用音乐来比方, 用中国话语, 可以称之为‘心象’”is very long but without using a single linking word, thus making its meaning abstract and unclear.

#### 3.3 Rich in Culture.

Chinese art, especially traditional art, is rooted in the profound cultural soil of the Chinese nation, integrating the unique aesthetic consciousness, thinking methods, aesthetic thoughts and philosophical concepts of the entire Chinese nation and forming a unique artistic system. Almost All art forms express Chinese culture in some way, with Chinese painting as the most important. Compared with other kind of articles, artistic texts especially artistic critics, as comments on Chinese art and artists, often full of China's unique culture with a higher paratactic level.

For example the Chinese sentence“柴祖舜‘心象’画中之‘象’, 是超越一般视象的无象之象, 是中国人特有宇宙意识和艺术精神中的‘罔象’之象。所谓罔象, 其实就是无形之象”has embodied Taoism.

### 4. SOLUTIONS

The three features have caused difficulties to the translating and revising work. Correspondingly, the difficulties in revising artistic texts can be summarized as "Three Difficulties" :(1) Difficult to confirm the accuracy and professionalism of the translation of artistic professional vocabularies; (2) difficult to understand the meaning of the original Chinese artistic texts; (3) difficult to convey the culture contained in the artistic texts.

The following examples will illustrate the above difficulties and propose corresponding solutions.

(1) Difficult to confirm the accuracy and professionalism of the translation of artistic professional vocabularies

Painting professional words such as "po(spill), sa(sprinkle), dian(dot), jiaomo, sumo, jimo" and sculpture professional words such as "fudiao, yaundiao, xianke, loukong" are hard to translate in English since they are unique in China.

These professional words can be divided into two kinds, one is common in both Chinese and Western art, the other is only unique to China. It is easy to find the corresponding translation for vocabularies common in both languages, which does not constitute the difficulty in revision.

The difficulty in the translation of professional vocabulary lies in the fact that some artistic forms or artistic expressions are unique to China, and there are no corresponding expressions in other countries, such as Chinese "xixiang" paintings and traditional Chinese ethnic musical instruments, such as Guqin, Laerang and Dabu. For this kind of vocabulary, the author thinks that it is necessary to look up a professional dictionary. If there is a fixed translation in the professional dictionary, it can be used directly. For the words that are not included in the professional dictionary at the moment, we can use the method of transliteration or annotated translation to express the original meaning accurately, and adopt the method of alienation to preserve Chinese culture.<sup>[3]</sup>

Eg: 达卜

Original translation : Dabo

The original translation is transliteration without any explanation, making readers confused. Therefore, we should make a little explanation in parentheses after it.

The revised translation is Dabo (a panting ophone from Uighurs and uzbek, named for the sound "da", "bo" when it is lot-sed, all called Tambourine.)

(2) difficult to understand the meaning of the original Chinese artistic texts;

Chinese is a paratactic language, with few or even no conjunctive words. Sentences are mainly linked by meaning. Besides, artistic texts are often artistic in themselves, which makes their paratactic level higher and more difficult to understand. This is one of the difficulties in translating and revising artistic texts. In the process of revising, the meaning and logical relationship of the original text should be clarified, and the necessary logical relation words should be added in the conversion into English.

eg: 画山水的画家，应尽可能地亲近山水，在大地上直面天光云影，感受花开花谢、江河奔流、风起云涌以充沛的激情、生动的笔触、优美的旋律去创造深入人心的艺术形象。

The original translation is: An artist of landscape painting should be close to nature as much as possible, to feel the flowers bloom and fall, the rivers flow, the winds blow and the clouds gather... With ample passion, dramatic brushwork and graceful lines, he then creates artistic works of electrifying effects.

Although this sentence is not difficult to understand, but its logical relationship needs to be clarified. The author believes that there is causal relationship within the sentence. "Only by getting close to the landscape and then by the help of passionate brushwork melody can the artistic image deeply rooted in people's hearts be created". This kind of causal relationship is relatively close, therefore it should be translated into a sentence without breaking it up.

In addition, a series of four-character words are often used in Chinese to express momentum. When translated into English, it is not necessary to translate word for word, but to express the meaning expressed in the original Chinese.

Therefore, the translation can be revised to:

“An artist of landscape painting should be close to nature as much as possible, to feel the scenes of the sky, clouds, flowers, mountains and rivers ... so as to create artistic works that deep into people’s heart with ample passion,dramatic brushwork and graceful lines.”

(3) difficult to convey the culture contained in the artistic texts.

Artistic texts do not simply contain basic text information, among which the culture conveyed is also very important. For example, Chinese painting, as a special painting art of China, contains Chinese culture in its painting art texts, such as Taoism. There are also some important images, such as "mei"(plum blossom), which in English means only a flower, but in China, "mei" is also a symbol of "perseverance and strength". Therefore, in translation and revising, special attention should be paid to the communication of the culture in the text, and some notes should be made according to the context when necessary, so that the target readers can better understand its meaning and connotation.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Through comparison and summary, we can find that there are three difficulties in revising artistic texts : high professionalism which makes it difficult to accurately express professional words, high paratactic level which makes it difficult to understand the original text, and rich in culture which makes it difficult to express the culture contained in the text. When revising, we should carefully analyze the original text, thoroughly understand the connotation of the original text, and revise and polish the translation from an angle higher than the text. These difficulties also suggest that translators and revisers should make great efforts to improve their Chinese proficiency and understand the structure of Chinese passages, which is of great benefit to the understanding of texts with high paratactic degree. Only in this way, the the meaning of the original artistic texts can be conveyed completely in the targeted language English.

Notes: The examples in this text are from the the following website: [http://www. Tongxinzha i.com/information/ view/id/44.html](http://www.Tongxinzha i.com/information/ view/id/44.html).

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