

# A Study on the Translation Model of Chinese Literature Entering the English World

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**Abstract:** With the increasing exchanges between China and foreign countries, Chinese culture and literature have attracted more and more attention from home and abroad. The translation and research of Chinese literature in the English-speaking world has also become the focus of domestic scholars. Methodologically speaking, it is an effective attempt to combine qualitative research with quantitative analysis, learn from the research methods of comparative literature, and explore from seeking common ground to seeking differences. Based on Lasswell's communication model, this paper constructs a translation model with five dimensions of "translation subject", "translation content", "translation approach", "translation audience" and "translation effect", in order to provide some references for the development of Chinese literature in the new era by combing the translation and research status of Chinese literature in the English-speaking world.

## 1. Introduction

With the continuous strengthening of sino-foreign exchanges, Chinese literature has received more and more attention in the English world. Many overseas sinologists and domestic scholars have joined in the overseas translation and research of Chinese literature, expanding the influence of Chinese literature in the English world. The most effective way is to strengthen the translation and introduction of Chinese literature to the outside world. Translation has become the main force to promote the development of world culture <sup>[1]</sup>. As an important part of the output of Chinese literature, the translation and introduction of Chinese modern and contemporary novels into English is of great significance for building an active and open image of contemporary China and improving the soft power of Chinese culture. English-speaking countries occupy a central position in the international arena, which makes the translation and research of Chinese literature in the English-speaking world more significant <sup>[2]</sup>. This significance is not only theoretical, but also practical. English is the most widely used language in the world at present. English cultural circle occupies an extremely important position in the world civilization ecology at present. Therefore, discussing the translation and research of Chinese literature in the English-speaking world becomes an important way to understand the methods and modes of Chinese literature spreading in the English-speaking world, which is of great significance for promoting the communication between Chinese and foreign literature and promoting the strategy of Chinese culture going out.

## 2. Translation and Introduction of Chinese Literature: Communication Behavior

In addition to the highly infectious content, the influence of culture also depends on the methods and means of cultural communication <sup>[3]</sup>. As a literary work bearing Chinese culture, it naturally becomes "one of the ways to explain China to the world and fulfill the important mission of the era when Chinese culture goes global" <sup>[4]</sup>. At the end of the century, imagist poets headed by Pound translated a large number of Tang poems, and borrowed the creation method of image superposition from Chinese poetry in his poetry creation, starting the influence of imagist poetry in the world and bringing modern American poetry to a climax. Pound was also called "the inventor of Chinese poetry in our era" by Eliot <sup>[5]</sup>. In contrast, few people in the United States can name several Chinese writers. The study of Chinese literature is limited to teachers and students of East Asian language and literature departments in various universities. It is not a question of how to switch between the

source language and the target language at the language level, but the unique value and significance of translation (mainly literary translation) as a practical activity of cross-cultural communication among human beings "[6]. It can protect China's status as a big country and win the respect of other countries, which gives the translation and research of Chinese literature in the English-speaking world a high level and vision of a powerful country strategy.

Looking at the current situation of translation and introduction of Chinese literature, there are many problems, such as the poor channels of translation and dissemination of Chinese contemporary literature, the imbalance between the translation of literary works into and out of translation, the imbalance in the distribution of translation in major foreign languages, and the obvious lack of English translation [7]. In the New Culture Movement after the May 4th Movement, many Chinese poets, such as Xu Zhimo and Liu Bannong, were influenced by Whitman's style of free verse and started the creation of new poems in China, thus creating a prosperous situation in Chinese poetry circles. However, from the end of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century, it was in a period of transformation between old and new literature, introducing a large number of "foreign goods" such as styles, sentence patterns, skills and theories from the west. The dual unfavorable factors of internal and external causes make the road of Chinese literature to the English-speaking world long and difficult. Among them, "the channel of translation and dissemination of literary works", that is, the choice of translation and introduction mode, has become the fundamental problem that Chinese culture faces in going out and is also an urgent problem to be solved. Considering the complexity of the time and manner of contact and communication between Chinese literature and the outside world, it is reasonable to mainly follow the main line of contact between Chinese literature and the outside world in time and discuss on the basis of key issues.

### **3. Inter-problems in Translation and Research of Chinese Contemporary Literature in English World**

The translation and selection of Chinese contemporary literary works by the West under the control of ideology are issues worthy of our attention. The selection of translation materials, the selection of translation strategies, the addition, deletion and rewriting of the original text all reflect the ideological manipulation. Since the French missionaries came to China at the end of the 17th century, the study of sinology in Europe has taken on a new look. French sinologists, in particular, introduced Chinese historical philosophy, language and literature works to Europe, enabling Europeans to gradually understand the charm of Chinese literature and art after advocating "Chinese style" in technology, gardens, architecture, etc. From the May 4th period to the literature of the new era after the 1980s, Chinese literature stayed in the learning stage of insufficient originality and more imitation for a long time. In addition, China's tradition of "writing to carry Tao" often leads Chinese literature into the cage of political ideology. This is a dynamic process, in which there is no lack of novelty and happiness. It is also inevitable that the journey will be meticulous and subtle. The experience will be thorny and even dangerous. The influence of ideology in translation can be said to be everywhere. Here we will look at this problem from the changes in the titles of several contemporary Chinese works when they are translated into English.

Foreign studies from external perspective and domestic studies from internal perspective can complement, identify and prove each other. We need to clarify what insights foreign studies of contemporary Chinese literature have, what inspiration they bring to domestic studies, and what adjustments and optimizations they bring to domestic studies. Previous studies on the history of literary exchanges between China and foreign countries often focused on sorting out the facts and lacked theoretical analysis and discussion on the impact of translation and introduction of Chinese literature on the West. When we study the translation and introduction of Chinese literature in the English-speaking world, we should learn from the perspective of others and understand our own characteristics. The number of translated works in China is extremely limited, and the translation quality of the translated works also needs to be improved. For a long time, China has adopted the official mode of translation by Chinese native translators. At present, Chinese contemporary

literature really does not exist in American society <sup>[8]</sup>. Many scholars have reflected on this phenomenon. Apart from the country's economic, political and cultural influence, our literary creation, translation and research also have deficiencies. Chinese classical literature such as Analects of Confucius, Zhuang zi, book of songs, Chu ci, Tang poetry and song ci, and the four famous works have achieved a great deal in overseas dissemination and research, while the translation and introduction of contemporary literature is limited compared with the creation of contemporary literary works. Because foreign Chinese literature researchers lack sufficient understanding of China's social and historical development, when analyzing Chinese literature works, they are easy to start from their own feelings, use limited Chinese knowledge, and add bold imagination and association. Although the conclusions drawn are unique and fresh, sometimes they are contrary to the original intention of the writer and the reality of China, resulting in serious misreading.

#### 4. Construction of Chinese Literature Translation Model Based on Lasswell's Communication Model

In 1958, Richard Bullock suggested that Lasswell's basic communication element model should be expanded to take into account two other elements that he thought Lasswell had ingored, namely "for what purpose" and "under what circumstances". As shown in Figure 1 below, the main content of this model is that in a closed-loop communication system, the receiver is both the receiver and the sender of the information, and noise may appear in all links of the communication process.

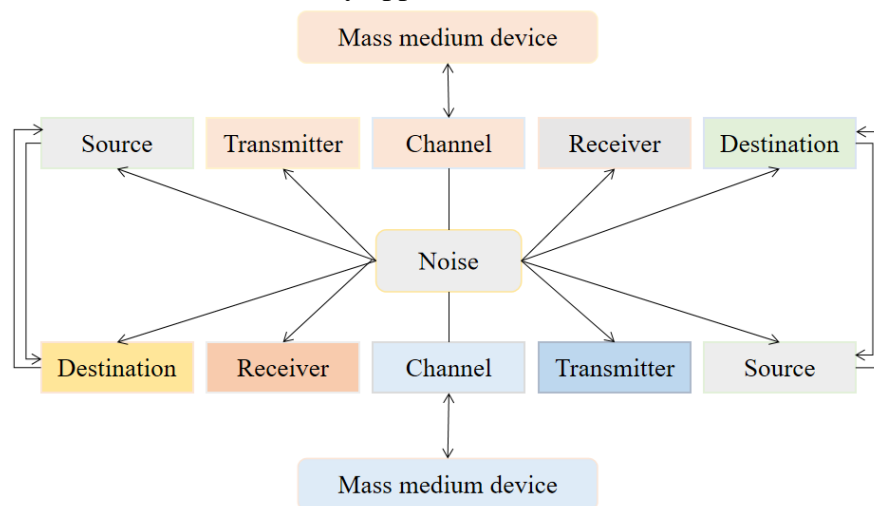


Figure 1 Model of Mass Communication System

##### 4.1. Subject of translation and introduction

"Who" is the first element of information dissemination. The subject of translation and introduction is the leading role and motive force in the translation and dissemination of literary works. After the classics have been translated, the form of language changes. However, during the ferry journey, we should still try our best to preserve the cultural factors of the original and preserve the classical value of the original, so that the intrinsic quality of the works can span cultural time and space. We can use our own literature to absorb western literature and theories, and then merge them with Chinese literature to complete the process of sinicization, so that a large number of translated works can truly become part of Chinese literature, especially Chinese poetics, rather than just a linguistic transformation. When choosing the translation text, the factor of individual translator should not be underestimated. The translator's life experience, national cultural psychology, artistic interest and ideological tendency constitute a "pre-understanding". Literature and cultural theories increasingly believe that narrative occupies a central position in culture. This theory holds that whether we regard our life as a series of continuous events leading to a certain place or tell ourselves everything that is happening in the world, stories are the main way we

understand things "[9]. Overseas research and local research can learn from each other. This kind of interaction should first allow and respect the inevitability of misreading. Moreover, the difference between overseas sinologists' research and Chinese native scholars' research is a valuable difference, which is helpful to cultivate a new growth point of Chinese contemporary literature research.

#### **4.2. Translated content**

Apart from promoting and popularizing Chinese culture, the content and theme of literary works are also an important element of translation and introduction. Of course, elements with national characteristics are indispensable, but the works themselves should at least not contradict the mainstream ideology, world outlook and values of the audience. Whether Chinese classics can become the classics in the foreign language world also depends on whether the works can be accepted and recognized. However, art is interlinked. The artistic infection of the works itself comes from deep cultural accumulation and at the same time from the communication and integration of the translators during the ferry journey. The western theoretical system has both cultural factors we need and factors we don't need, so we might as well learn Emerson, Pound, Rexroth and Snyder. We can choose whatever western cultural elements are needed in Chinese literature and poetics today. However, human beings will never be able to get rid of the mysterious code of nature, which is the innate nature attribute. Located in the mountain, there will be a mountain of integrity; Located in the grassland, there will be grassland disposition. As far as novels are concerned, the translation and introduction of Chinese classical novels are highly valued, and each of the four famous works has multiple versions. However, the translation, introduction and dissemination of modern and contemporary novels are relatively small compared with the domestic creative situation. Only by finding the first-hand materials reported by foreign media and having a real understanding and grasp of the situation on the scene of the speech can we judge the extent of its influence. We cannot only listen to the speaker's own opinions or the exaggerated reports of some domestic media based on his opinions.

#### **4.3. Approaches to translation and introduction**

The way of translation and introduction is an important part of the communication process and a material means to realize the communication behavior. The first way for Chinese literature to go out is to issue and publish. Lu Xun's short stories are of milestone significance in the development of modern Chinese novels and have strong artistic vitality. Lan Shiling chose to translate Lu Xun's novels not only because she personally likes the style of Lu Xun's works, but also because she has a clear understanding of Lu Xun's classical position in Chinese literature and culture. It is impossible to complete the sinicization of western theories by blindly imitating, and it is even more impossible to obtain the development of Chinese literature by blindly rejecting. After we have translated and introduced a large number of western theories, our scholars should calm down and think rationally about western literature, especially in modern western literary theories. What do we need? Literature review is an external stimulus from the external environment. As consumers of cultural products, readers will actively search for information from the surrounding environment in order to make more rational consumption decisions. Such reviews full of praise create a friendly public opinion guide for the promotion of works [10]; The mainstream position of novels in contemporary literature is not only the characteristic of Chinese literature, but also the general development trend of world literature. Compared with the prosperity of Chinese novel creation today, its translation and introduction are obviously lagging behind. Therefore, the translation and research of Chinese literature in the English-speaking world should not stop at the perceptual stage, but should make a rational summary and strengthen the empirical and objective research.

#### **4.4. Translation audience**

As the direction of the translation chain, audience is indispensable and cannot be underestimated. It is the recipient of translation works and the destination of cultural transmission. Peng Dingan enthusiastically praised the nationality of Lu Xun's works from the perspective of "Lu Xun: National Fables and National Texts in 20th Century China": "His novels, whether they are" Loud

Shouts ", "Imitation Cui "or" New Stories ", are full of, instilled in, played with rich, thick and deep nationality, and reflect the history, culture, society and life of the nation. Only by absorbing Chinese cultural rules can there be a peak of innovation and theory in Chinese literature. Out of the mentality of being colonized after a century of colonization, on top of its incomparable glorious historical and cultural traditions, the important task of rebuilding the Chinese spiritual world, absorbing the western thoughts and knowledge traditions that have been integrated in the past century, and rebuilding the Chinese thoughts and learning has been calling on us. Professional readers expect to make synchronic or diachronic researches on Chinese culture, ideology, world and values through the window of translating and translating works. Driven by the psychological motivation of this audience group, the translator is not so much switching between Chinese and English. Translation is an important link in the process of communication. There is no doubt that differences in language and culture will add many obstacles to the translation of novels and foreign reading. It is also the development trend of Chinese literary translation strategy in the 21st century to try to convey the foreign cultural features, foreign language forms and the abnormal writing techniques of the original.

#### **4.5. Translation effect**

The investigation of the translation effect should be the next independent topic after the translation and dissemination of literary works. The translation model of sinologists refers to translators who are sinologists. They understand Chinese and Chinese culture. As citizens of the English-speaking world, they are well versed in English culture and have strong English writing ability. Such as "A Dream of Red Mansions" (the last 40 chapters), translator of Jin Yong's martial arts novel "The Duke of Mount Deer" (John Minford), compiler of Shen Congwen's collection of short stories (Jeffrey C.Kinkley), translator of Qian Zhongshu's "Fortress Besieged" Jenny Kelly, etc. Globalization not only affects Chinese literary theory, but also the soil for Chinese literary creation——The social and cultural reality has also produced systematic influences and restrictions day by day, thus posing new challenges to the subject of contemporary Chinese literary practice in how to deal with the relationship between "globality" and "nativeness" or "nationality". However, due to the translator's poor skills in English and American culture and English literature creation, as well as the lack of in-depth understanding of the reading habits of foreign readers and the literature publication market, the translation model in China is hardly recognized by foreign experts and readers. Of course, as the translation activity itself, we should pay attention to the translation subject, translation content, translation approach and translation audience, etc., and accurately grasp the propagation rules to obtain the ideal effect.

#### **5. Conclusion**

The overseas communication of Chinese contemporary literature is essentially the cross-cultural communication of Chinese literature. In order to avoid the failure of communication caused by the cultural conflict psychology of overseas audiences, it is also necessary to have a deeper understanding of the social and cultural psychological mechanism in the process of cross-cultural communication. Lasswell's communication model provides an effective and feasible model for the construction of Chinese literature translation and introduction model. While respecting western culture and values, we also fully understand and respect the culture and values of Chinese nativeness and nationality reflected in Chinese contemporary literary works, so that we can not only translate excellent works, but also be competent as the best promoter and spokesperson for the overseas dissemination of Chinese contemporary literary works. With the government attaching great importance to the cultural export project and the close interaction among writers, translators, literary critics, foreign publishers and foreign readers, Chinese modern and contemporary novels will win more readers in the global village.

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