



## Information, Allusions and Connotation of Cultural Interpretation in English Translation

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### ABSTRACT

*Due to the emphasis on simplicity and symmetry, ancient Chinese documents often use a large number of allusions and connotation extension techniques. The expression of the theme is more euphemistic, and the technique of expressing one's mind directly is rare. This brings great difficulty to foreign readers in reading and understanding. The thought and connotation expressed by a few words are very rich. This richness is not in the text, but outside the text. Therefore, the function of cultural interpretation plays a vital role in the understanding of ancient Chinese documents. It is its existence that ensures the intelligibility of ancient documents in translation.*

**KEYWORDS:** *cultural interpretation, background information, allusions, explanation of connotation*

Due to the translation obstacles caused by the cultural differences between the original language text and the target language text, it is necessary to use a series of techniques through annotation to eliminate the understanding obstacles caused by cultural differences, elaborate and supplement the special cultural or social phenomena that may be involved in the original text with the cultural background and description language that readers can understand. For some poems, translators can achieve semantic equivalence and stylistic equivalence in their translation skills. However, because of the differences in cultural factors such as customs, history and religion, there is an obstacle to understanding the cultural connotation of the translation for the target language readers in the process of reading the translation, perhaps out of the background of foreign cultural concepts and unfamiliarity with the context of strange cultural background. With the help of annotation, a special compensation means, it is necessary to assign the limited poetry lyrics of the translation to the in-depth expansion information on the back of the original translation, which should be supplemented and explained in the annotation. For example, in Wu Guozhen's *Mencius* translation series, "弟子齐宿而后敢言" is translated as "I went on a fast last night before I venture to speak in your presence now" (Wu Guozhen 2015:103). The translator annotated the word "fast" in the Translation: in ancient China, before an important event, one would go on a fast to show his sincerity, usually by taking a bath, abstaining from alcohol and pungent-odor things like leek, onion and avoiding intimacy with his spo. In ancient China, poets would fast on

important festivals or meet people they valued to express their attention to one matter or one person. Although prayer is a similar behavior in the west, its cultural significance and behavior connotation are very different, which will still cause obstacles in reading. This cultural difference is more common in poetry. There are three usages in the annotation of cultural interpretation, including background information interpretation, allusion interpretation and explanation of connotation.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Background information is the most important part of the function of cultural interpretation in the process of translation. This paper often involves a series of background understanding problems, such as the author's era, situation and so on. Notes can help readers fully understand the background information provided, that is, the background information of the author, the formation of the classical text, the historical, social and cultural background information involved in the classical text content, and the preset information of the text content (Du min, 2005). There are great differences between ancient Chinese culture and modern western culture, which are not only cross-ethnic and cross-cultural differences, but also cross-time and space. Considering the changes of Chinese for thousands of years, even today's Chinese readers may be afraid of the obscure "moved by scholars' not meeting with good fortune" if they lack the basic knowledge of classical Chinese, not to mention the readers in the western English world. The difficulty of



understanding is unimaginable. Under such a variety of differences, cultural defects and gaps in literary translation are natural. Inevitably, translators can only give full play to their imagination and innovative skills (Wei Jiahai, 2017) and minimize the loss of language context caused by translation by adding notes outside the text or adding background in comments. In the translation, the interpretation of background information often appears in the comments, but when it comes to specific poems, it is still necessary to point out the background of the original text and the reasons for the author's expression. The translator should not translate poetry into prose, nor should he translate expository text into narrative text (Tan Zaixi, 1984). “或击壤以自欢，或大济于苍生；靡潜跃之非分，常傲然以称情” is translated by sinologist Davis into:

“He may break the soil to deliver himself,  
or he may bring great aid to mankind.  
Since no 'hiding or leaping forth is not apportioned,  
he will always act proudly in accord with his feeling.

Without special notes, western readers may have doubts about the poet's behavior of breaking the soil, and it is difficult to understand why the poet wants to break the soil. However, the previous and subsequent articles do not give a reasonable explanation, and even ordinary readers will have an inexplicable sense of absurdity. However, by adding “chi-jang 'break the soil' belongs to the terminology of inheritance; it occurs in the story of 'The tiller', who is included in HSI K'ang's Sheng Hsien Kao Shih Chuan and later collections of this type. Thus this line presents the alternative of withdrawal to the lute of service of the following line.” The notes not only explain that soil blasting is an agricultural skill, but also further explain its source, so that readers can deepen their understanding of this behavior, but also further understand the ancient Chinese culture, especially the agricultural background of ancient China. Readers can build the framework of ancient agricultural culture by combining comments and notes, which is also of great help to understand the following text.

## **ALLUSIONS**

Allusions explain that there are countless stories and characters in Chinese culture for 5000 years, from the pre-Qin Dynasty to modern times, and Chinese poetry has the skill and usage of quoting previous stories to express emotion and narration. Therefore, there are a large number of allusions in poetry. In ancient times, there were speeches advocating the use of allusions. “At that time, allusions, such as Qu Zi's race, Zi an's pavilion and other things, were all included, which is called the moon order response.” Allusions are concise and comprehensive, but they cause great difficulties in translation. Allusions focus on cultural differences, historical differences, age differences and cognitive differences. For foreign language readers, this may have reached the

highest level of difficulty. In the translation, “if master yüan had not intervened for him, I know that Chang Chi would have ended in obscurity. I grieve that the aged Feng, when palace secretary, should need perfect Wei's case to present his advice.” Without the interpretation of allusions and the understanding of people's names in the text, readers are easy to think that this plain narration of poetry and prose can not further understand the context and background it expresses, and the understanding of poetry and prose is easy to be superficial. Through the following two notes, “Chang Shih Chih (courtesy-name Chi; biology in Shih-chi 102, closely repeated in Hanshu 50) was seeking to retire after ten years at the court of Emperor Wen without advancement, when by the intercession of Yüan Ang he was appointed Master of Audiences(yeh-che). Subsequently he became Commandant of Justice (t'ing-wei). His son Chih appears in Drinking Wine, XII.p.9.” “The aged Feng T'ang (his biography follows that of Chang Shih-chih in Shih-chi 102 and Han shu 50) at the end of a series of discussions on generals with Emperor Wen introduced the case of Wei Shang, Prefect of Yün-chung (modern Tuku, Sui-yüan), who had been removed from his his post because of a discrepancy in the number of enemy killed in a battle with the Hsiung-nu. As a result the emperor sent him with a pardon, restoring Wei Shang to his post. He appointed Feng Commandant of Chariots and Cavalry (ch'e-ch'i tu-wei)”. Readers can well understand that the poet used the allusions of Zhang Shizhi recommended by Emperor Wen of the Han Dynasty and Feng Tang recommended Wei Shang to Emperor Wen to demonstrate the difficulty of “meeting scholars” by saying that “although it is only necessary to know, it is also painstaking in a long time”.

## **EXPLAINING THE CONNOTATION**

Chinese poetry and prose pay attention to euphemism. In the process of expression, they often do not directly express the connotation, but hide the connotation of poetry and prose in the passage through various skills. It is often necessary to understand the emotional feelings expressed by the author in combination with the context and the author's life square. However, western readers are often difficult to read and understand the connotation alone due to their understanding and cultural differences. It is extremely easy to Show Lack Of Judgment. They focus on the poetry itself without exploring the emotions expressed behind it. The translation of cultural classics focuses on the source language version in terms of content and form (Zhu Zhenwu, 2016). They hope to promote their virtual to match the time, but when the time comes, it does not prove favourable. If this poem is not annotated, it is difficult for western readers to understand why the poet said that the time was not enough, and even more difficult to understand why it is needed to “promote their virtual to match the time”. The western understanding of virtue is quite different from Chinese culture. The requirements for virtue in western society are not as high as those in ancient China. Ancient Chinese virtue plays a very important role in

social evaluation. It is often determined whether to grant an official position through a person's virtue, but through the annotation, "from I, Wen Yuan to hexagram 1: the gentleman promotes his virtue and cultivates his studies, because he wishes to match the time, i.e. be equal to his opportunity", readers have a clearer understanding of its connotation, and can feel the poet's emotional cry.

## CONCLUSION

When English translation involves ancient Chinese classics, we often need to have an in-depth understanding of ancient Chinese culture. Translation only through text meaning will lose most of the information of the original text. The cultural interpretation function of annotation in paratext theory allows readers to understand the original text under the cultural background through the interpretation of ancient customs and culture. Cultural interpretation mainly realizes its function through three aspects: information interpretation, allusions and connotation.

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