Research on Application of "Qi He" in Translation of Chinese Classics in "Fragmented Reading" Era

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Abstract

The advent of the digital age has resulted in a significant shift in reading habits, leading to what is commonly referred to as the "Fragmented Reading" era. With the rise of digital platforms and the availability of vast amounts of information at our fingertips, readers are increasingly engaging in non-linear, fragmented reading practices. This poses unique challenges for translating Chinese classics, as the original texts often rely on cultural and historical contexts that may not be readily understood by modern readers. In such a context, the concept of "Qi harmony" offers a fascinating approach to bridging the gap between the past and the present. This essay aims to explore the application of "Qi harmony" in the translation of Chinese classics in the "Fragmented Reading" era.

Keywords

Qi He, fragmented reading, Chinese classics, translation.

1. Introduction

"Qi harmony" or "qihe" is a central concept in traditional Chinese philosophy and refers to the harmonious balance and integration of various elements. It encompasses an understanding of the dynamic interplay between various forces and seeks to achieve a state of harmonious coexistence. In the context of translation, "Qi harmony" can be seen as a metaphor for the harmonious blending of the translator's interpretation with the original text, as well as the integration of the translated work with the contemporary cultural and linguistic landscape.

Introducing Chinese classics to the world involves a combination of strategies that promote cultural exchange, educational initiatives, and translation efforts. Here are some approaches to consider:

Translation and Publishing: Translating Chinese classics into multiple languages, particularly English, is instrumental in making them accessible to a broader international audience. Collaborating with skilled translators and partnering with reputable publishers can help disseminate these translations globally. It's important to prioritize high-quality translations that capture the essence and cultural nuances of the original texts.

Scholarly Research and Publications: Encouraging and supporting scholarly research on Chinese classics can contribute to their global recognition and appreciation. Initiatives such as academic conferences, research grants, and publication opportunities can foster a deeper understanding of these texts among scholars worldwide. Additionally, making research findings and critical editions of Chinese classics accessible to the public can enhance their visibility and scholarly impact.

Educational Programs and Exchange: Collaborating with educational institutions globally to incorporate Chinese classics into curricula and language programs can significantly promote their study and understanding. Establishing exchange programs or inviting scholars and experts from international institutions to share their insights can foster cross-cultural dialogue and create opportunities for in-depth engagement with Chinese classics.

Digital Platforms and Multimedia: Leveraging digital platforms, such as websites, online libraries, and e-books, can provide a convenient and widespread dissemination of Chinese classics. Developing interactive and multimedia resources, including audio recordings, videos, and online courses, can enhance the learning experience and engage a wider range of audiences, including younger generations.

Cultural Events and Exhibitions: Organizing exhibitions, festivals, and cultural events dedicated to Chinese classics can generate public interest and curiosity. These events can showcase the historical significance, artistic expressions, and cultural values embedded in these texts, promoting cross-cultural understanding and appreciation.

Collaboration with Cultural Institutions: Collaborating with museums, libraries, and cultural institutions globally can facilitate the exhibition and preservation of ancient manuscripts, artifacts, and related materials tied to Chinese classics. Sharing resources and expertise can support research, conservation efforts, and public engagement initiatives.

Promotion through Media and Digital Platforms: Engaging with various forms of media, including print, television, radio, and online platforms, can help raise awareness of Chinese classics. Interviews, documentaries, podcasts, and social media campaigns can create buzz and generate interest among a diverse audience.

By employing a multifaceted approach that combines translation, education, scholarly research, cultural exchange, and government support, Chinese classics can be introduced and appreciated by a global audience, fostering cross-cultural understanding, and contributing to the enrichment of world literature and cultural heritage.

2. Bridging the Gap

The fragmented reading practices of the digital age often result in a loss of context for readers. Chinese classics, with their rich historical and cultural backgrounds, may become less accessible to modern audiences. By applying the concept of "Qi harmony" in translation, translators can endeavor to bridge this gap by making the texts more relatable and understandable to contemporary readers. This involves striking a balance between fidelity to the original and the need to contextualize the work within the target readers' frame of reference.

In the "Fragmented Reading" era, translators must also grapple with the challenge of cultural sensitivity. The concept of "Qi harmony" provides a useful framework for navigating this complexity. By employing "Qi harmony" in translation, translators can adapt the original text to resonate with the cultural sensitivities of the target audience without sacrificing the essence and philosophical underpinnings of the Chinese classics. The use of language and style is another crucial aspect of translation. In the "Fragmented Reading" era, where attention spans are often shorter, translators must find ways to capture and sustain the interest of readers. With the application of "Qi harmony," translators can utilize language and style that emulate the fluidity and rhythm of the original text while also catering to the demands of contemporary readers.

3. Application of "Qi harmony" in Translation of Chinese Classics

In the "Fragmented Reading" era, the translation of Chinese classics presents unique challenges. However, by applying the concept of "Qi harmony," translators can navigate these challenges and create translations that bridge the gap between the past and the present. "Qi harmony" allows for the integration of different elements, including cultural sensitivity, adaptation, language, and style, resulting in translations that resonate with contemporary audiences while remaining faithful to the essence of the original texts. As we continue to navigate the

complexities of the digital age, the application of "Qi harmony" in translation holds great promise for preserving and promoting the richness of Chinese classics.

In translating Chinese classics, it is essential to ensure that the cultural and historical context is effectively conveyed to the modern reader. The concept of "Qi harmony" can guide translators in adapting the text to resonate with the target audience's cultural sensibilities. For example, in translating an ancient poem that refers to specific historical events, the translator can provide footnotes or additional explanations to contextualize the references, allowing readers to grasp the significance of the poem within its historical context. This allows for a harmonious blending of the original text's cultural nuances with the readers' contemporary frame of reference.

The language and style used in Chinese classics may differ significantly from modern literary conventions. Translators need to strike a balance between preserving the elegance and poetic essence of the original text while ensuring readability and engagement for contemporary readers. By applying the concept of "Qi harmony," translators can adopt a stylistic approach that captures the rhythmic flow and beauty of the original text while using language that resonates with the readers. This balance creates a harmonious fusion of the classical and the contemporary, allowing for a more immersive reading experience. Chinese classics often incorporate profound philosophical and spiritual concepts. To effectively translate these concepts, translators can employ the idea of "Qi harmony" to ensure that the essence and subtleties of these ideas are conveyed accurately. For instance, if a classic text explores the concept of "wu wei" (non-action) in Taoism, the translator can use suitable terminology and explanations that harmonize with the target readers' philosophical and cultural background. This approach ensures that the translation not only captures the literal meaning but also effectively communicates the underlying wisdom and spiritual essence of the original work. Chinese classics often feature poetic forms such as rhymes, alliterations, and rhythm. Translating these poetic elements requires a careful balancing act to maintain the musicality and poetic impact of the original while also conveying the intended meaning. By embracing the concept of "Qi harmony," translators can strive to recreate the poetic beauty in the target language by utilizing linguistic devices that evoke similar aesthetic effects. This approach fosters a harmonious convergence between the original text's artistic qualities and the translated work's literary merits.

By applying this concept, translators can create adaptations that effectively bridge the gaps between different eras, cultures, and linguistic systems, allowing the timeless wisdom and beauty of these works to resonate with modern readers. Chinese classics possess distinct language features that contribute to their unique style and essence. Some of the main language features of Chinese classics include: Imagery and Symbolism: Chinese classics are known for their rich use of imagery and symbolism. The language employed often paints vivid mental pictures and invokes abstract concepts through the use of metaphor and simile. Symbolism is frequently employed to convey deeper meanings and associations within the text.

Conciseness and Economy: Chinese classics often demonstrate a preference for brevity and conciseness. This is achieved through the careful selection of words and avoidance of unnecessary repetition. The language used is both precise and economical, allowing for the transmission of complex ideas in a clear and succinct manner.

Poetic Elements: Poetry plays a significant role in Chinese classics, and as such, poetic elements are present throughout the text. This includes the use of rhythmic structures, parallelism, rhyme, and meter. The incorporation of poetic techniques enriches the language, enhancing its aesthetic qualities and contributing to its musicality.

Evocative Nature: Chinese classics emphasize the evocative power of language. The language employed aims to evoke emotions, stimulate thought, and transport readers to a specific time

and place. Through the use of descriptive and vivid language, Chinese classics create a sensory experience for the readers, immersing them in the world of the text.

Cultural References: Chinese classics often make extensive use of cultural references, drawing upon historical events, folklore, and philosophical concepts. This provides a deeper layer of meaning and context, connecting the text to the larger body of Chinese cultural heritage. The language used in Chinese classics, therefore, incorporates elements of historical and cultural knowledge that enrich the reading experience.

Syntactical Structures: Chinese classics utilize a distinct syntactical structure, differing from that of modern Chinese. Sentences are often arranged in a parallel or symmetrical fashion, with a focus on balance and harmony. This structural feature reflects the philosophical underpinnings of harmony and balance prominent in Chinese culture.

Archaic Vocabulary: Chinese classics may incorporate archaic or poetic vocabulary that is less commonly used in modern Chinese. These archaic terms provide a connection to the historical context of the text, reflecting the era in which the Chinese classics were written.

These language features collectively contribute to the unique character and beauty of Chinese classics. By understanding and embracing these features in the translation process, translators can effectively convey the essence and intent of the original text to modern readers.

The "Fragmented Reading" era refers to the reading habits and practices that have emerged in the digital age. Here are some main features of this era: Non-linear Reading: In the fragmented reading era, readers tend to engage in non-linear reading practices. They often skim through texts, jump between different sources, and focus on specific sections or snippets of information rather than reading a text from beginning to end. This is largely facilitated by the availability of digital platforms and search engines that allow quick access to specific content.

Shorter Attention Spans: With the abundance of information and distractions in the digital world, readers' attention spans have become shorter. They may lose interest quickly and switch between multiple sources or tasks within a short span of time. This makes it challenging for texts to capture and sustain readers' attention. Multitasking and Information Overload: The digital era has enabled readers to engage in multiple activities simultaneously, such as reading, browsing social media, and checking emails. This multitasking behavior often leads to information overload, as readers are exposed to a continuous stream of information from various sources simultaneously. Digital Devices as Reading Platforms: The proliferation of digital devices, such as smartphones, tablets, and e-readers, has transformed the way people read. These devices offer convenience and portability, allowing readers to access a wide range of texts anytime and anywhere. However, reading on digital platforms often presents distractions and challenges in maintaining focus. Fragmented Content Consumption: The fragmented reading era is characterized by the consumption of fragmented content. Readers may encounter information through social media posts, news headlines, or blog articles, often in bite-sized and easily digestible formats. This fragmented content consumption contributes to a fragmented reading experience where readers encounter information in disconnected pieces rather than engaging with cohesive narratives or complete texts. Reader-Driven Content Selection: In the digital age, readers have more control over the selection of content they engage with. They can curate their own reading materials, tailor their preferences, and choose from a vast array of sources and genres. This reader-driven content selection often leads to personalized reading experiences that cater to individual interests and needs. Interactive Reading and Participation: The fragmented reading era allows for greater reader participation through comments, discussions, and sharing of content. Social media platforms and online communities facilitate interactions among readers, enabling them to engage in conversations about the texts they encounter. This interactive dimension adds a new layer to the reading experience.

These main features of the fragmented reading era highlight the significant shifts in reading habits and practices brought about by the digital age. They present both challenges and opportunities for readers, content creators, and translators, necessitating novel approaches to adapt to the evolving landscape of information consumption.

"yihe" is the minimum requirement, followed by "tihe" and "yihe" is the highest requirement. "yihe" includes three aspects: lexical meaning, organizational meaning, and systemic meaning. Its main basis, according to Pan's theory, is Liu Xie's theory of literature in the "Wen Xin Diao Long," supplemented by Lin Yuanbiao, who states that this is also the exegetical system represented by "Classics Studies" in ancient China. "tihe" provides the characteristic markers for grasping the four major language elements of ancient literary styles - rhyme, parallelism, rhetoric, and tone. It serves as a criterion for distinguishing different forms of translation of classical texts. "qihe" mostly belongs to the art theory of translation. "qi" is the soul concept of Chinese literature, and it has always been a difficult-to-explain core term in the theory of literature. Pan quotes Liu Daji, who succinctly points out that "qi" refers to the arrangement of syllables and the length of sentences. Pan also provides several related concepts in the theory of literature that are applicable to the "art of translation," such as "shen" - simulating someone's style of expression, "yinyang" - the style of the work and the author, "mai" - the connecting thread throughout the text or the author's train of thought, and "wei" - expressing more than just the literal meaning. Therefore, there is a relationship between the three: "yi" and "ti" operate at the linguistic level, while "qi" operates at the artistic level.

4. Conclusion

The criteria for evaluating the quality of a translation are diverse. Each translation method, technique, and strategy has its own advantages and disadvantages, and they are applicable to specific texts and situations. More importantly, whether exotic cultural classics can be accepted and embraced by the local culture depends on the recognition of "other" cultural identities by the local culture. It is not a problem that can be solved solely through translation. Translation is always accompanied by the unstable balance of power between two cultures. Translation is not a product where one text is equivalent to another text, but rather a complex rewriting process, which equally involves the entire linguistic landscape and the overall concept formed by the history of the 'Other' people. It involves the influence and balance of power between two cultures. Therefore, the project team believes that only when the linguistic features and narrative styles of Chinese classics can be faithfully translated and understood by the world, and when Chinese culture can harmoniously integrate into world culture, will it truly be the time for Chinese cultural classics to go global.

Acknowledgements

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