

A Corpus-Based Contrastive Study on the English Translation of “Wine Culture” in *the Romance of the Three Kingdoms*

—Take Xiangyang as an Example

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ABSTRACT

The world is undergoing profound changes unprecedented in a century. Against the backdrop of the new historical journey of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. The cultural exchanges between China and the West are becoming more and more frequent. More and more scholars begin to explore the English translation of China's classical classics like *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. However, at present, researches mainly focus on the translation skills of language and text, and less pay attention to food culture. Besides, there are few articles based on corpus comparative analysis. Therefore, this paper selects the English versions of Taylor and Moss Roberts as the corpus, classifies the different cultural connotations of wine, selects the wine culture in the Jingchu Xiangyang area in *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* as the research object, and carries out quantitative statistics by taking CUC_ParaconV0.3 and Cncorpus as tools, compare and analyze the translation arts in the two versions, and compare the translation strategies and skills of different versions from micro and macro, to summarize their translation strategies and methods and promote Chinese "wine culture" to the world.

Keywords: *Romance of the Three Kingdoms, Corpus, Xiangyang, Wine culture.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Wine has been a session of people's spiritual and cultural life since ancient times. Thus, all living beings, including emperors, ministers, poets, and martial arts scholars, have an indissoluble bond with wine. This kind of drink has almost become a necessity in people's life^[1]. As a work with the highest achievement and the greatest influence in ancient historical novels^[2], the "wine" in *the Romance of the Three Kingdoms* carries many Chinese excellent traditional cultures. It is passed down from generation to generation in the change of history and plays an important role in spreading Chinese traditional culture in the post-pandemic era. There are more than 100 descriptions of wine in *the Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, like warming wine to kill Huaxiong who is a character in *the Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. As for Xiangyang, the "first ancient city of *the Romance of the Three Kingdoms* culture", had wine culture as early as ancient times. During the Three Kingdoms period (220-280), Xiangyang belonged to the nine counties of

Jingxiang and became an important battlefield for the competition among the heroes. In the Han Dynasty, there were large-scale brewing wine workshops in Xiangyang, with excellent skills, which have been inherited to this day. Many famous wines are produced in Xiangcheng, Gucheng, Nanzhang and Baokang. Xiangyang wine has the reputation of "a unique Chinese Baijiu". It not only reflects the daily preferences of Xiangyang people, but also shows their wisdom; also, it embodies their simple folk customs, and kindness, tells us their attitude of loving life. All of these is the expression of their hospitality, love and righteousness. Studying the translation of Xiangyang "wine culture" during *the Romance of the Three Kingdoms* and exploring its connotation, from ancient etiquette to today's culture, is of practical significance to promote the internationalization of Xiangyang and spread the unique wine culture in this area.

With the development of translation, *the Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, has gained many fans all over the

world. However, as the COVID-19 swept the world, the research process of the whole academic community gradually slowed down, and its pace to the world also been impacted accordingly. Recent foreign studies have proved the effectiveness of parallel corpora in bilingual contrastive and translation studies^{[3][4]}. Scholars believe that the translation equivalence shown in parallel corpora is more diverse than the cross language correspondence suggested by semantic models, and is more in line with the reality of language use^[5].

Therefore, based on CUC_ParaconcV0.3 and Cncorpus, this paper intends to start from the perspective of "wine culture", take quantitative and qualitative analysis to research on the translation art of Xiangyang "wine culture" in the two translations of *the Romance of the Three Kingdoms* by Taylor and Moss Roberts, so as to make up for the gap in the current corpus comparative analysis and research of this Chinese classical work, to promote the development of industrial culture strategy of Jingchu culture, the construction of Jingchu "wine culture" industry, and the development of Chinese classical literature translation. Thus enhance the cultural confidence of Chinese people in the post-epidemic era, improve China's soft power, and boost Xiangyang's "wine culture" to the world.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

To ensure that translators' word selection has reference and comparative value, this paper uses Comparative Analysis Approach and Corpus Retrieval Method to explore the translation art and information transmission of the translation of *the Romance of the Three Kingdoms*.

From the perspective of bilingual and multilingual corpora, corpus can be divided into parallel (aligned) corpora and comparative corpora^[6] according to the organization form of corpora. The former constitutes the translation relationship and are mostly used in machine translation, bilingual dictionary compilation and other application fields. The latter collects different language texts expressing the same content and is mostly used in language comparative research. In this paper, CUC_Paraconc V0.3 is selected to serve as a parallel corpus retrieval software, and Cncorpus is used as a data collection tool.

Using the above methods, the first step is to select and analyze the corpus and determine the scope of the corpus. Through searching and screening, this paper selects *the Romance of the Three Kingdoms* published by Zhong Hua Book Company in 2009 as Chinese corpus, and selects the English versions of Taylor and Moss Roberts as translation corpus. In view of the research area, the original texts that occurred in Xiangyang are selected. By taking "wine culture" and "Xiangyang" as the screening scope, finally this paper obtains the texts being consistent

with the conditions. And then they are classified according to the purpose of drinking. Then, to optimize the translation versions, including scanning the texts of Taylor's and Moss Roberts' respective translations, converting them into editable electronic documents through the recognition software ABBYY FineReader15, and using the Text Cleaner to clean redundant spaces, so as to make the translated texts more convenient for reading and analysis, and then classify and save them based on the screening scale. The third step is to align the original texts and the translations one by one through Tmxmall, and save them as txt. format. Finally, based on the previous work, the original texts are imported into Cncorpus for word frequency statistics, obtain qualified relevant data and then sort and save them. Thus, import the txt. files into CUC_ParaconcV0.3 to carry out English Chinese bilingual retrieval and analysis, and sort out and save the relevant data after obtaining the same.

In doing so, this paper plans to analyze the translation art between the two versions of Taylor and Moss Roberts on translating "wine culture" in Xiangyang.

3. THE TRANSLATION ART OF "WINE CULTURE" IN THE CHINESE-ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF *THE ROMANCE OF THE THREE KINGDOMS*

After manual comparison and screening, the corpus consistent with the above conditions is finally obtained, which is mainly reflected in the 23rd, 31st, 34th, 35th, 52nd, 60th, 73rd and 75th session. Then, by matching them with "wine culture" and Xiangyang, they can be divided into acting wine, hospitality wine, mutual complaint wine, accident wine etc. according to the scene purpose of "wine". In view of the differences between scenes and the length of the article, this paper will select the most frequent ones for analysis.

3.1. English translation skills of acting wine

The acting wine in *the Romance of the Three Kingdoms* is mainly to hold a banquet to promote the implementation of strategies (eg. Cao Cao's banquet for the prince's clothes in the 23rd session) and buy wine to achieve one's plan (eg. Zhao fan set up wine in the 52nd session to bring down Zhao Yun). After reading, this paper selects the drinking scenes related to this purpose. Through the Cncorpus online analysis and processing function, the word frequency of the original text can be counted based on the words related to "wine culture" and this kind of purpose for drinking. Then, based on the data obtained by Cncorpus, using CUC_ParaconcV0.3 to bilingually retrieval the versions of Taylor and Moss Roberts one by one. Finally, the data are obtained and sorted into Table 1 and Table 2.

It is found that when translating the acting wine in Xiangyang: Taylor uses literal translation to convey the

literal information of the original text^[7], and uses common words; Moss Roberts focuses on the context and social background of the original text to convey the connotation information of the original text, and uses more connotative words.

Example 1

Source text (Hereinafter referred to as "ST"): 云饮微醉，范忽请出一妇人，与云把酒。^[8]

Taylor's version (Hereinafter referred to as "Taylor"): When Zhao Yun was a little intoxicated, his host bade a woman come forth and offer a cup of wine to the guest.

Moss Roberts' version (Hereinafter referred to as "Moss Roberts"): Zilong was beginning to feel intoxicated. Suddenly Zhao Fan summoned a woman to serve the wine.

Example 1 is selected from the 52nd session of Zhao Fan's setting up wine to bring down Zhao Yun. Zhao Fan invited the woman to "把酒" in order to attract Zhao Yun's attention and try to lure him down through the woman. Therefore, here it is actually a kind of flattery. For the word "把酒", Taylor uses "offer a cup of wine to" to express the meaning, while Moss Roberts applies "serve the wine". The difference between the two translators lies in "offer" and "serve". After consulting relevant materials, "offer" means "provide; give", while "serve" has the meaning of "provide; receive; serve a purpose, role, or function". Combined with the context of original text, it is not difficult to see that Moss Roberts' translation is better, showing Zhao fan's hospitality and flattery. Moreover, through the word "serve", the target readers can also experience the "customer-oriented" wine etiquette in Xiangyang.

3.2. English translation skills of hospitality wine

Hospitality wine, as the name suggests, is for entertaining guests and expressing one's heart (eg. in the 60th session, Zhao Yun prepared wine to receive Zhang Song, Xuande to hold a banquet for Fa Zheng). Similarly, by using Cncorpus and CUC_ParaconV0.3 to analyze and sort out the data, and get Table 3 and Table 4.

When translating wine for the purpose of hospitality, although there is little difference in word selection between the two translators, study shows that Moss Roberts translates it from the perspective of cultural context, and takes into account the social situation, history and culture, customs and moral concepts, value standards and thinking mode of the language and social group where the original text is located^[9]. In other words, his translation showed the hospitality of Xiangyang people since ancient times, such as "meeting friends with wine" and "no wine, no seat", so the information transmission is more in line with the original text.

Example 2

ST: 玄德看毕大喜，设宴相待法正。^[8]

Taylor: This letter greatly pleased Liu Bei. He made a banquet for the bearer thereof...

Moss Roberts: Xuande exulted on reading the letter. He ordered a banquet for Fa Zheng.

This example is selected from the 60th session of Xuande to hold a banquet for Fa Zheng. It is a typical scene in the original text where superiors entertain subordinates, reflecting the author Luo Guanzhong's respect for Confucian etiquette culture. As for its translation of "设宴相待" is translated by Taylor as "made a banquet for the bear", and Moss Roberts as "ordered a banquet for Fa Zheng". Let's look at the choice of verbs first. Taylor chose "made" while Moss Roberts "ordered". The former is "make; do", and the latter is "order; request; request to provide services; order (wine and vegetables, etc.)". During the Three Kingdoms period, people drank by focusing on "ceremony". In Xiangyang, people paid more attention to "drinking is emotion, hospitality should be appropriate and considerate". Therefore, combined with the cultural context of the original text and the wine culture of Xiangyang, the selection of the word "ordered" is not only in line with the hierarchical relationship between the original characters, showing the social situation of the language and social groups where the characters were in the Three Kingdoms period, but also in line with the inheritance of Confucian etiquette in buying wine and entertaining guests in Xiangyang.

3.3. English translation skills of mutual complaint wine

In *the Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, everyone gets together to drink, not only for business affairs, but also for mutual complaint of sadness and heart (such as Liu Qi's complaint of sadness after drinking in the 35th session). Relevant data are shown in Table 5 and Table 6.

It is found that when translating the wine of mutual complaint, both translators have made partial omission translation in combination with the context of the original text. However, the translation of the word "心事" is different.

Example 3

ST: 酒至半酣，表忽然长叹。玄德曰：“兄长何故长叹？”表曰：“吾有心事，未易明言。”...相与对饮。酒酣，表忽潸然泪下。玄德问其故。表曰：“吾有心事，前者欲诉与贤弟，未得其便。”^[8]

Taylor: While they were so engaged, Liu Biao suddenly began to sigh despondently. "O brother, why do you sigh thus?" asked Liu Bei. "I have a secret sorrow that is difficult to speak about," said Liu Biao...They drank on for a time till presently Liu Bei noticed that his host was weeping, and when he asked the cause of these

tears, Liu Biao replied, "It is that secret sorrow I spoke of to you before. I wished to tell you, but there was no opportunity that day."

Moss Roberts: Becoming mellow, Liu Biao sighed deeply, and Xuande asked why. "There is something on my mind," Liu Biao answered, "that is difficult to speak of" ...They drank more and grew warmer. Suddenly Liu Biao began weeping profusely. Xuande asked what was the matter. "Something is on my mind," was they reply. "I tried to broach it that last time we were drinking but circumstances made it awkward."

Obviously, Taylor translates "心事" into "secret sorrow", which is a kind of "secret sadness; sad things that cannot be easily revealed". However, Moss Roberts translates it into "something is on my mind", meaning "I have something weighing on my mind". Combined with the original scene, Liu Biao's "心事" is mainly about his second son. Therefore, this paper agrees with Taylor's translation, "secret sorrow" conveys the implied meaning of Liu Biao. Moreover, through her translation, it also reflects the character of Xiangyang people who speak implicitly and pay attention to "loyalty" and "integrity" under the breeding of the vast history of the Three Kingdoms. It is consistent with the characteristics of Xiangyang people gathering and having a reunion, having a banquet and drinking, telling each other about their feelings when they are in love and opening up to each other.

4. CONCLUSION

Chinese wine culture is broad and profound. It can not only express aspirations and emotions, but also act as a medium of interpersonal relations, playing its unique role in your coming and going. In the long development process of Chinese wine culture, Xiangyang wine culture is an indispensable part. There are many poems to describe the development of Xiangyang "wine culture" and the characteristics of Xiangyang wine.

By studying the translations of Taylor and Moss Roberts, it is found that there are great differences in the choice of words between them in the translation of the wine culture of Xiangyang in *the Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, which is mainly due to their differences in the understanding of the customs and culture of Xiangyang,

thus leading to the differences in the translation of different "wine" events. In order to reflect the wine culture in Xiangyang in the original text, Taylor selects words based on the language context of the original text^[12], while Moss Roberts is based on the situational context and cultural context of serving wine and offering wine. Therefore, for the target audience, Moss Roberts' translation is more readable, acceptable and recognized.

By comparing and analyzing the English translation art and information transmission of "wine culture" in Xiangyang in *the Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, this paper makes a comparative study of word frequency by using corpus, and obtains the following enlightenment:

First, the choice of words should take into account fidelity, accuracy, difference and purpose^[13]. The translator should not only choose words from their literal meaning, but also analyze them in combination with the original text, based on the original background, occurrence situation, cultural background and the differences between Chinese and Western thinking, so as to convey the regional etiquette and humanistic emotion contained in the wine as much as possible.

Second, based on the cultural connotation of the original text, convey the artistic essence of the original text. As Zhu Zhenwu said: Nowadays, the oriental culture represented by China plays an increasingly important role in world cultural exchanges. As the messenger of cultural communication, the translator also has the responsibility to let the target readers appreciate the original Chinese literary works and experience the artistic characteristics and charm of Chinese literature^[13]. Therefore, while trying to convey the meaning of wine, we should analyze the artistry of the original text and show the deeper information and the artistic nature, so that the target readers can further understand the artistic characteristics and charm of Chinese wine culture.

Third, the translator should act as the disseminator of China's "wine culture". As a messenger of cultural communication, translators should combine what they have learned in the classroom, help Xiangyang build "historical and cultural card" through continuous practice and reflection, set an example for the translation of China's "wine culture" and help China's food culture go global.

Table 1. Statistical table of word frequency of original text of acting wine and word selection frequency of Taylor's Chinese-English Translation

Original words	Original frequency	Target words	Target frequency
饮 (酒/宴)	11	banquet;drink;pour out	2/8/1
赐 (酒食) /请	2/3	Serve;give/invite;request	3;2/ 2;1
酒食	2	Wine and refreshments;wine	1 / 1
把酒	1	offer a cup of wine to	1

酬	1	return courtesy for courtesy	1
大醉	1	quite overcome	1
置酒	1	had wine served to	1
佳酿	1	fine wines	1
设宴/设席/饮宴	1	prepare a banquet for;Tables were laid in;went to a banquet	1

Table 2. Statistical table of word frequency of original text of acting wine and word selection frequency of Moss Roberts' Chinese-English Translation

Original words	Original frequency	Target words	Target frequency
饮 (酒/宴)	11	banquet;drank;enjoy;capacity for drink	3/6/1/1
赐 (酒食) /请	2/3	give;invited	2 / 3
酒食	2	food and drink;wine and food	1 / 1
把酒	1	serve the wine	1
酬	1	reciprocate the courtesy	1
大醉	1	good and drunk	1
置酒	1	省译	1
佳酿	1	the wine is finely	1
设宴/设席/饮宴	1	The banquet was laid in;to a banquet	1

Table 3. Statistical table of word frequency of original text of hospitality wine and word selection frequency of Taylor's Chinese-English Translation

Original words	Original frequency	Target words	Target frequency
数 (杯/巡)	3	several times ; a few cups of ; had mellowed themselves with	1/1/1
大张筵席	1	a grand banquet prepared	1
置酒共饮	1	offered him wine	1
排上酒筵	1	refreshments were served	1
设宴相待	1	made a banquet for	1
跪奉酒食	1	brought forward wine and food	1

Table 4. Statistical table of word frequency of original text of hospitality wine and word selection frequency of Moss Roberts' Chinese-English Translation

Original words	Original frequency	Target words	Target frequency
数(杯/巡)	3	several rounds ; in a few cups ; circulating	1/1/1
大张筵席	1	the feast	1
置酒共饮	1	shared the ritual wine	1
排上酒筵	1	a banquet was spread	1
设宴相待	1	ordered a banquet for	1
跪奉酒食	1	kneeling humbly, carried over refreshments	1

Table 5. Statistical table of word frequency of original text of mutual complaint wine and word selection frequency of Taylor's Chinese-English Translation

Original words	Original frequency	Target words	Target frequency
故	3	Why ; the cause of ; 省译	1
酣	3	engaged ; 省译 ; After some little drinking	1
忽然	2	suddenly	2
心事	2	secret sorrow	2
泪	2	Weep	2
长叹	2	sigh despondently ; sigh	2
对饮	1	They drank on	1

Table 6. Statistical table of word frequency of original text of mutual complaint wine and word selection frequency of Moss Roberts' Chinese-English Translation

Original words	Original frequency	Target words	Target frequency
故	3	Why ; what was the matter ; the reason	1
酣	3	mellow ; grew warmer	2/1
忽然	2	省译	2
心事	2	something on my mind ; Something is on my mind	1
泪	2	Weep	2
长叹	2	Sigh; 省译	1
对饮	1	They drank more	1

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