

Cultural Dissemination of *The Journey to the West* in the Philippines: A Case Study on the English Version by Yu Guofan

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Abstract: *The Journey to the West* is one of the most famous Chinese classical novels and popular with the Chinese from generation to generation. With the continuous infiltration of cultures among countries, the novel has gradually been included into the perspective of world culture, and its popularity of the English translation by Yu Guofan among the Filipino public attracts the scholar's attention. The study conducts a follow-up research to enrich the existing findings on the Chinese classic novel, and mainly analyses its acceptance in the Philippines which is facilitated by Yu Guofan's English version. As one of the representative works of Chinese classical literature, it is worthwhile to examine its dissemination process in the history and its dissemination characteristics in the Philippines for a better understanding of the factors that affect the dissemination of Chinese literature in the English world. Besides, experience can be summed up and guidance can be provided for the translation strategies of Chinese classical literary works in other countries in the future, thus to accelerate the pace of spreading Chinese culture to the world.

Keywords: *The Journey to the West*; China's Classical Literature; Chinese-English Translation; Cultural Dissemination

1. Introduction

At present, the ties between countries in politics, economy, science and technology and culture are getting closer. The vigorous development of cultural exchanges and cooperation gives people the opportunity to experience the charm of different cultures, and also allows them to enhance mutual understanding and friendship. Literature is a treasure of the cultures of various countries, and the exchange between different literatures has built a favourable bridge for the exchanges of cultures among various countries [1]. Therefore, it is of great importance to conduct studies on literary translation which not only improves culture communication, but also promotes cultural exchanges. As Chinese people learn about other literature and culture through the translation of literary works of other countries, people from other countries also learn about Chinese literature and culture through the translation of Chinese literary works [2].

China and the Philippines established diplomatic relations on June 9, 1975. Since the establishment of diplomatic ties, China-Philippines relations have been developing smoothly on the whole and cooperation in various fields has been expanding continuously. In November 2018, the president of P.R.C., paid a visit to the Philippines, and the two heads jointly planned the future development of bilateral relations and reached important consensus. They decided unanimously to establish comprehensive strategic cooperation relation on the basis of mutual respect, honesty, equality, mutual benefit, and win-win cooperation as well as to consolidate further cooperation in the supporting fields of culture, education, and development. The Philippines is an important partner of China in jointly building the "One Belt and One Road", and it is worthwhile to study on how to deepen mutual understanding and trust between the two countries to build the basis for harmonious development and promote the building of a community with a shared future for mankind [3].

The cultural exchange and communication with literary exchange as the starting point to create emotional bonds plays a positive role in the promotion of "Chinese culture going out". *The Journey to the West* is one of the most famous Chinese classical novels published in the 16th century during the Ming dynasty and attributed to Wu Cheng'en. As one of the Four Great Classical

Novels of Chinese literature, it has been described as arguably the most popular literary work in East Asia. Arthur Waley's abridged translation, *Monkey*, is known in English-speaking countries. Since the second half of the 20th century, various and rich texts and non-text works on this novel have been adapted and created based on the translation and introduction, and relevant researches are carried out in the fields of literature, art, film-making in European countries. It is said that *The Journey to the West* seems to be a Chinese cultural symbol and brand with global popularity and influence, and its popularity in the Philippines also draws the attention of the researchers [4].

Language and culture are inseparable from each other, therefore translation has played an indelible role in the dynamic development of culture as it encourages people from different countries to understand each other, which is conducive to the reference and integration of different cultures, and is more conducive to the long-term development and prosperity of human culture. However, literary translation involves cultural exchanges and collisions between different countries and the differences between cultures also bring many difficulties to literary translation. The translation of cultural-specific items has always been the focus and difficulty in literary translation: how to convey cultural elements with strong national characteristics to the target language readers and how to ensure that their connotations are accurate and not to cause confusion during the translation process have always been what language researchers and literary translators are extremely concerned about, and they also have different opinions on how to define and classify culturally specific items [5].

The century-enriched English translation history of *The Journey to the West* plays an important part in spreading the Chinese classical literature to the world, and it provides researchers with abundant materials. Comparative studies of translation often weigh between faithfulness and unfaithfulness and choose between literal translation and free translation. On the whole, there is still no comprehensive and in-depth special study on the translation and dissemination of the novel in the English-speaking world at home and abroad. Although domestic and foreign sinological studies have been paid considerable attention in recent years, it is aimed at the westward biography in the story. The historical research results are basically concentrated ten years ago. Although new problems are still emerging, no one keeps track of them and does follow-up research [6].

The case study of the English version of *The Journey to the West* by Yu Guofan can cast a light on the development trend of Chinese classical literature and even the English translation of classics, provide a reference for future Chinese-English translation research, and trigger an inspiration for the spread and acceptance of Chinese classical literature in the English world. Furthermore, the analysis of the culture dissemination of *The Journey to the West* can on the one hand help people to better understand the dissemination history of the novel from different angles, and on the other hand grasp the relationship between the English translation and culture dissemination. In short, the study on culture dissemination of the English translation of *The Journey to the West* in the Philippines is both academically and strategically significant to shed a light on the strategies of Chinese-English translation of Chinese literary works and promote the approaches of spreading the Chinese culture in the world [7].

2. The Cultural Dissemination of *The Journey to the West*

2.1. About Cultural Dissemination

Cultural dissemination, also known as cultural communication or cultural transmission, refers to the process in which human culture radiates outward from its cultural source or spreads from one social group to another, and influences certain receivers. Wilbur Lang Schramm, the father of communication studies, summarized this definition as "A passes B to D through C to achieve effect E." Here A is the sender of the message, B is the message, C is the channel or medium, D is the receiver of the message, and E is the effect caused by the dissemination. Cultural dissemination promotes the generation and development of multi-culture and accelerates the process of globalization in the forms of oral, written, printing and electronic media. It has the functions of education, communication, civilization inheritance and evolution, and is an important driving force for contemporary and future development of both the society and people [8].

The process of cultural dissemination depends on many factors, such as its practical value, difficulty, reputation of civilization, adaptability to the times and resistance to adversity. R. Linton, a cultural anthropologist, divides the process of cultural dissemination into three stages: contact and manifestation, selection and adoption, and integration. In the first stage, one or several foreign cultural

elements appear in a community and are noticed by people. In the second stage, people in the community criticize, select, adopt or reject the foreign cultural elements. In the third stage, the foreign cultural elements are integrated into the community culture after being adopted. Compared with the former two stages, the latter is more difficult to achieve, because from the perspective of geographical separation, the dissemination spreads from the cultural centre to all sides. According to the general law of information decline, the farther away from the cultural centre the community, the less the original form of foreign cultural elements can be maintained. When a foreign cultural element spreads to another region, it is no longer in its original form and meaning, and has been modified in the process of selection and adoption [9].

2.2. About the Novel *The Journey to the West*

The Journey to the West is a classic Chinese mythology novel, created during the Ming Dynasty in China, and the content comes from some traditional folk tales. There are 100 chapters in the original work, which mainly tells the story of the Tang Dynasty monk Sanzang and his three apprentices Sun Wukong, Zhu Wuneng and Sha Wujing going to the west to worship Buddha and learn scriptures. The first seven chapters tell about the birth of Monkey King and his riot in Heaven. The eighth to twelfth chapters tell about Sanzang's life experience and why he went to Xitian to learn the scriptures, and his preparations before learning the scriptures. The latter part of the novel tells how the four masters and apprentices defeated various demons and ghosts and overcome various difficulties on the way to learn the scriptures, and finally arrived in the west and obtained the truth [10].

The novel *The Journey to the West* created a new category of China's gods and demons full-length chapter novels as it skilfully combined well-meaning ridicule, bitter satire and serious criticism. It is the peak of China's ancient full-length romantic novels and a masterpiece of romanticism in the history of world literature. The reasons can be traced from the following perspectives. Firstly, among the China's classical novels, its content is the most complex due to the blend of Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism thought the book--it not only interweaves the doctrines and beliefs of Buddhism and Taoism but also injects with humanistic realism into the world of deities and a few words of Confucian wisdom, which empowers it to be both solemn and humorous, and it ranks the top out of the works of the highest ideological and artistic level. Secondly, the plotted imagination of the novel reaches the peak. Sun Wukong was born in the story of havoc in heaven, which successfully created the image of the witty and strong monkey king. With a strong rebellious character, he despised the corrupt and incompetent rulers of the Heavenly Palace and shouted the slogan "emperor takes the office in turn, next year I will take the crown". Other characters in the novel also have their personalities--Zhu Wuneng is lazy but simple and lovely; Sha Wujing is hardworking and honest; Sanzang is stubborn; and the white dragon horse is wholehearted and sincere. Readers of different ages, educational backgrounds and walks of life can find their reflection in the novel. Thirdly, the story of pilgrimage to the West reflects the two main themes of supernatural novels--seeking the truth and killing the demon, and *The Journey to the West* skilfully combines the two. It on one side tells people that all kinds of difficulties are bound to stand in the way to realize an ideal or to complete a great cause and encourages them to persistently overcome the setbacks, and on the other side inspires people with the hope of ultimate success and achievement.

2.3. About the English Versions of *The Journey to the West*

The earliest translation of *The Journey to the West* in the English world can be traced back to 1854. The early stage begins from the year 1854 when the British missionary Joseph Edkins (1823-1905) introduced it in *The North China Herald* to the year 1930 when Helen M. Hayes (1906-1987) published her translation of *The Buddhist Pilgrims Progress*. During the stage, most of the translators were missionaries and few were Chinese translators. Since 1884, fragments of the journey to the West have appeared in Chinese or English newspapers and periodicals, or in the history of Chinese literature or anthologies of stories written in English in modern times. But it was not until the beginning of the 20th century, in 1913, that the first English translation of *The Journey to the West* was published: *A Mission to Heaven*, translated by the British missionary Timothy Richard (1845-1919), published in Shanghai by The Christian Literature Society for China, which he directs.

The middle stage begins from the publication of Hayes' section translation in 1930 to the publication of the first volume of the complete translation by Professor Anthony C. Yu (1938-2015) at the University of Chicago in 1977, and 6 of the 11 translators were Chinese. There are even translations co-written by Chinese and Westerners, and missionary translators were replaced by scholars, writers

and professional translators. During this period, not only many partial translations of stories, literary magazines and literary anthologies appeared, but also many popular translations aimed at the general audience were published. For example, John Hayes' *The Buddhist Pilgrims Progress* (1906-1919), British Sinologist Arthur Waley's *Monkey* (1889-1966) and Czech translator George Theiner, *The Monkey King* (1926-1988).

The mature stage begins from 1977 when Yu Guofan published four volumes of the complete translation, to 2012 when he completed the revised version. During this period, two complete translations were completed by Yu Guofan and W. J. F. Jenner (1940-) respectively. Moreover, Yu Guofan published a revised version in four volumes in 2012, more than 30 years after the first version was published. This translation is a typical academic translation published by the University of Chicago Press. At the beginning of the first volume, there is a long introduction comparable to an academic paper. On the basis of his predecessor's research achievements, he expounds his views on the origin, version, author, origin of poetry and theme of the novel with detailed notes at the end of each volume which fully reflect his academic views.

3. The Case Study of Yu Guofan's Version in the Philippines

3.1. Popularity of Yu Guofan's Version

The English translation (text) of *The Journey to the West* by Yu Guofan is selected as the corpus. Through a diachronic and synchronic descriptive study of the English versions of *The Journey to the West*, the overall characteristics and trends of the historical process of the English translation of this novel are concluded and various factors that affect the process are identified. In general, few researches on this novel from the perspective of language phenomenon are conducted and there are still many linguistic topics that need to be explored. The general trend of translation studies is to further expand the interpreted objects, enrich the research methods, and enlarge the interpretation angles. This is mainly due to the fact that translation studies rely on the complex relationship between literature and cultural poetics, translation and non-translation, source text and target text, and obtains research resources from the extension of translation disciplines, accumulate internal research volume and external research quality. The improvement of translation studies has resulted in the thickness of translation research materials and the depth of research paradigms, the expansion and generalization of translation research objects, and the empirical and practical methodology.

Among the English versions of *The Journey to the West* by different translators, it is beyond question that the version by Yu Guofan stands in the test of time as it is generally accepted both overseas and at home, and it has been spread in the form of being either complete or excerpted to other countries through various dissemination medias and corresponding foreign translations. The translator faithfully conveys the author's purpose to follow the judging standard of translation, emphasizing faithful beauty or faithfulness. Yu Guofan is not only a translator, but also a senior scholar and sinologist, therefore he integrated the latest research findings of this novel into his translation, enriching the complete translation with keen academic colors. Proficient in both Chinese and English as he is, he applies the translation strategy of "foreignization" and strives to convey Chinese culture to the greatest extent. His translation closely follows the research pulse of this novel and can be said to be the synthesized product of contemporary academic research.

3.2. Factors behind the Culture Dissemination

The realization of cultural dissemination requires acceptable translation by the target readers, continuous innovation of outward communication channels and the use of mass media. The English translation of *The Journey to the West* was first started in 1854. During these more than a hundred years, there were more than 60 versions in the English translation alone. Since the second half of the 20th century, the texts and translation that have been adapted and created based on the translation and introduction of *The Journey to the West*. The non-text works are even more dazzling. It can be said that when *The Journey to the West* first entered the British and American world in the form of translation, it has actually become a deformed work by sinologists, that is, a diversified product accepted by them in the English context. The Anglo-American literature system has a wide range of acceptance and influence.

After *The Journey to the West* entered the English world, it continues to receive continuous attention of Western translators. The translations (the original) of this novel are various. Due to the

influence of historical and cultural context and other aspects, these translations themselves are smeared with distinctive and different colours of the times, providing a wealth of research materials for the researchers of the English translation of the novel. Specifically, because some translations are relatively easy to obtain, the most preferable version of the case study is the translation of *The Journey to the West* by Yu Guofan.

3.3. Text Translation

In view of the existing versions of English translations of *The Journey to the West*, it can be found that most of the existing works concerning the history of the English translation of the novel are summaries of historical materials, and there are problems with missing materials, inaccurate information, and lack of analysis of historical context and translation trends. This paper can be a follow-up to broaden the existing aspects, and mainly discusses the cultural transmission of the English version of *The Journey to the West* in the Philippines. The study of the English translation of *The Journey to the West* provides some reference for the strategies of translation and culture dissemination. Reflecting on the translation and dissemination of *The Journey to the West* in the English world, its text form ranges from full translation to section translation, its existence from independent texts to newspapers, selected monographs, and its text content from focusing on the adventure stories of the “monkey” to focusing on the symbolic meaning of the novel[11].

In literary translation, the strategies of domestication and foreignization are very practical and reliable. However, it has always been controversial in the translation industry which strategy would be preferred between domestication and foreignization, and translators’ hesitation about the balance of the two strategies directly leads to a low efficiency of translating work and a poor quality in translated text, which ultimately hinders the literature exchange and culture dissemination. However, Yu Guofan has set a good example to balance the translation method of domestication and foreignization, and it is helpful to promote the spread of Chinese culture on a comprehensive study of its rich and profound connotations [12].

3.4. Acceptance of *The Journey to the West* among the Filipinos

In consideration to the adequacy of literacy and the deficiency of Chinese literature courses in the Philippines, the teachers and students in the universities are selected as the interviewees in the experiment of understanding the novel *The Journey to the West* among the Filipino public. The statistics are collected both by the means of online questionnaires, interviews and actual surveys in the universities. The ratio of actual interviews to online questionnaires is 1:1. In order to avoid the influence of gender factors (Taking into account that the different genders may affect whether *The Journey to the West* has been better perceived), the proportion of male respondents is 50% and the proportion of female respondents is also 50%. In order to avoid the influence of educational factors (Taking into account that the level of education may affect whether *The Journey to the West* has been understood), the proportion of respondents aged 18-25 years old is 90.91% and the proportion of respondents aged 26-35 years old is 0.09%. The basic information of the interviewees is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: The basic information of the interviewees

Males	Females	Age18-25	Age26-35
50%	50%	90.91%	0.09%

3.5. High-frequency Vocabulary in the English Version of *The Journey to the West*

The English version of the Philippines is selected for comparison (They are Timothy Lee’s *A Mission To Heaven* (1913), Arthur Willy’s *Monkey* (1942) and Yu Guofan’s *The Journey to the West* (1977-1983), *Journey to the West* by Timothy Li). Through the statistics of the quantification and frequency of the total vocabulary and characteristic vocabulary of the four translations, it is also found that the objective narration and subjective lyric of the translation are different in terms of words, and there are also differences in the conversion between Chinese and English. For example, the different preferences for the use of the personal pronouns they (them), we (we), I (I), you (you), and the material pronoun it reflect the difference in narrative perspective; the characteristic words, such as the quaint word thence, are used in personality and the lyrical meaning highlighted by the context is prominent. From the statistics of this vocabulary, it can be seen that the plural personal pronouns we and they are

used more, and the pronoun one which refers to the person is used less. The comparison of high-frequency words is shown in Table 2. The analysis of high-frequency words is shown in Figure 1 [13-14].

Table 2: Comparison of high-frequency words.

Translation words	One	We	They	I	How	What
1	0	6	9	5	2	0
2	2	6	5	0	1	1
3	3	8	7	5	0	1
4	1	6	3	5	0	1

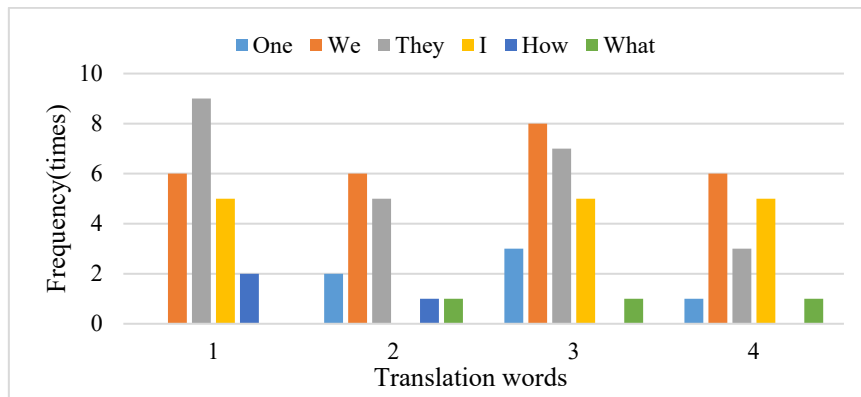


Figure 1: High-frequency word analysis.

3.6. Channels through Which the Philippine Public Understands

In the experiment of understanding of *The Journey to the West* among the Filipino public, the statistics is collected from the university students and teachers by means of online questionnaires, interviews and actual school surveys (18-35 years old, education level of universities undergraduates, postgraduate and doctorate). The ratio of male to female questionnaires collected is 1:1. The ratio of actual interviews to online questionnaires is 1:1. It is found that 40% of participants (500 people) understood *The Journey to the West* through the English translation by Yu Guofan.

40% of the population learned about *The Journey to the West* through the English translation, 10% learned about it through cartoons, 10% learned about it through comics, and 20% learned about it through movies. Besides, family narration accounts for 5%, teacher accounts for 3%, games account for 6%, the murals of *The Journey to the West* account for 1%, and the stage shows account for 5%. However, compared with the study of *The Journey to the West* in the Philippines, the study on the transmission of the other three great classical novels of Chinese literature in the Philippines is scarce. The novel integrates Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism into a harmonious world, and it is not difficult to see that Buddhism runs through the whole story of learning from the scriptures in the whole work. The channels through which the Philippine public understands the novel are shown in Figure 2.

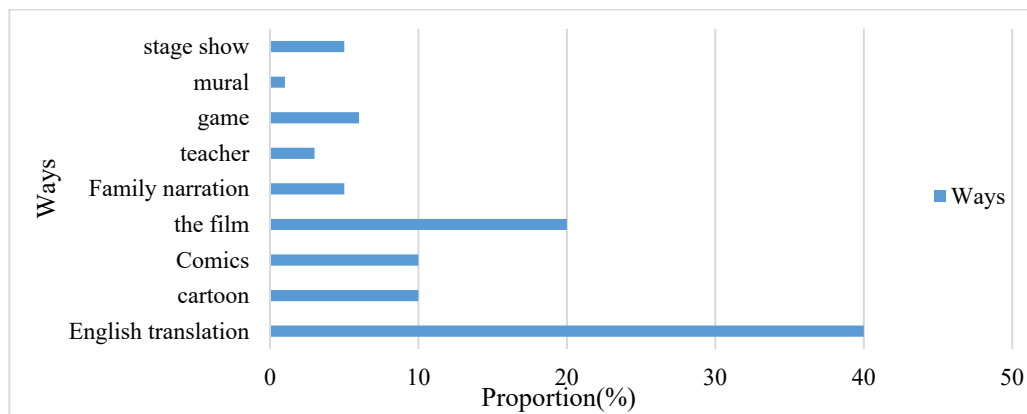


Figure 2: Channels through which the Philippine public understands *The Journey to the West*.

4. Conclusion

Undoubtedly, for any complete literary or cultural activity to become famous in a foreign country, it must include three links: translation, transformation, and public acceptance. The three links are indispensable. In particular, its success or failure can be simply based on the degree of public acceptance. The effect is judged. Specifically, for a work to be circulated outside the territory, firstly, professional acceptance is the starting point. The translator needs to select and outline the translation text based on the original text, and reorganize the content and knowledge that he accepts and considers it worthy of translation. The deformed result enters the field of vision accepted by the public, and it will be further filtered and spread under the drive of their "expected vision". The general trend of translation studies is to further expand the description objects, enrich the research methods, and more diverse description angles.

The study mainly discusses the cultural dissemination of Yu Guofan's English translation of *The Journey to the West* in the Philippines, and some limits inevitably exist. For one thing, the author can only describe and summarize the available materials as much as possible out of the large number of English translations and materials. For another, it is obvious that some source texts of *The Journey to the West* are intentionally ignored by the translator because he believes they are likely to make the research inaccurate or disoriented as there is unnecessary exposure of descriptions of sex and dis-integrity. However, these missing translations (this text) in this research point out the direction for the future work: on one side, it is advisable to diligently dig out the missing materials in this research may bring new inspiration to the research of this novel; on the other side, the cooperation of academic research initiated in line with translation in the humanities field between China and the Philippines not only conforms to the real and long-term interests of the two countries and their peoples, but also makes important contributions to the two countries' joint efforts to maintain peace, stability and cultural prosperity in the region.

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