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A Research on the C-E Translation of *The Road to Happiness* from the Perspective of the CEA Framework

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Abstract

In recent years, with the deep implementation of China's transportation power strategy, the strategic importance of transportation has become increasingly prominent. However, the concept of transportation extends beyond physical infrastructure and transport systems; it also encompasses a rich dimension of transportation literature. Translating transportation literature not only facilitates the global dissemination of Chinese culture but also showcases China's transportation strength through written narratives. Guided by Professor Li Changshuan's CEA framework, this paper examines how the effective transmission of Jiangxi transportation literature can be achieved through the three translation dimensions of comprehension, expression, and adaptation, using specific translation examples. This study also responds to President Xi Jinping's important speech during his visit to Jiangxi, providing theoretical support and practical reference for the cross-cultural dissemination of transportation culture. The study uses *The Road to Happiness* (selected from *Jiangxi Transportation Culture*) as a case example. The study finds that the CEA framework is applicable to the translation of transportation literature, demonstrating that transportation reflects not only material infrastructure but also the relationship between national development and historical change through literary expression. The translation of transportation literature helps international readers understand China's transportation power strategy and promotes the global dissemination of Chinese transportation culture, contributing to the construction of China's image as a transportation power.

Keywords

The Road to Happiness; CEA Framework Transportation; Literature; Transportation Power

1. Introduction

Transportation, as the lifeblood of the economy and a bridge of civilization, plays a crucial role in promoting social progress and regional development. It is also a key area for implementing the principle of "ecological priority and green development." Since the implementation of the 14th Five-Year Plan, Jiangxi Province's transportation industry has fully embraced Xi Jinping's thoughts on ecological civilization and his important remarks during his visit to Jiangxi. Significant progress has been made in technological innovation, the construction of green transportation infrastructure, adjustments in transport structures, the promotion of green and energy-efficient transport equipment, and pollution control efforts.

These initiatives have laid a solid foundation for building a green transportation system in Jiangxi, providing strong support for high-quality economic and social development (Yin Jieru & Cao Chihao, 2024). Against this backdrop, transportation tools serve as key vehicles for achieving ecological and green transportation goals, closely intertwined with people's lives and livelihoods. They are not only physical carriers but also cultural and social symbols that reflect the technological advancements and social changes of different eras (Li Yanshu, 2016). The evolution of transportation and its tools are mutually reinforcing, and in today's world, translation has become a focal point for society. Translation can effectively facilitate cultural exchanges and mutual understanding between China and other nations, contributing to the creation of a shared future for humanity (Xu Jun, 2021). The interaction between transportation development and translation promotes societal modernization.

In literary contexts, transportation tools frequently appear as symbolic images, representing characters' actions, migrations, and emotions, thus forming a rich literary landscape. Translating works of transportation literature can help present China as a transportation power on the global stage.

The Road to Happiness is an exemplary work of transportation literature. The author recalls the hardships of rural transportation, particularly the muddy roads on rainy days and the difficulty of catching buses, emphasizing the challenges and inconveniences of the past. With time, the construction of highways has transformed the face of the author's hometown, using the changes in roads to reveal the broader changes of the era, and showing how these shifts in transportation development have driven economic growth under the national transportation power strategy. This study takes *The Road to Happiness* as a case study to explore how transportation literature can be effectively translated within the CEA framework.

2. Overview of Li Changshuan's CEA Theory

Professor Li Changshuan (2021) proposed that translation involves three interwoven and mutually reinforcing processes: Comprehension, Expression, and Adaptation. Based on these three processes, Professor Li developed the "CEA Framework," which stands for Comprehension, Expression, and Adaptation in translation practice reports.

In translation practice, a correct understanding of the original text is the foundation and prerequisite for successful translation. The accuracy and fluency of the expression directly depend on the translator's depth of comprehension of the source text. If the translator fails to fully grasp the meaning of the original, the translation may struggle to convey the original thoughts and emotions accurately, leading to miscommunication. As Li Yongcun (2023) stated, comprehension is the starting point of translation, while expression is an extension based on that understanding. Only with a thorough understanding can a translator effectively express the meaning and ensure the quality and readability of the translation. Therefore, translators must not only have strong bilingual skills but also possess deep comprehension and analytical abilities to avoid misinterpreting the original text. Translation is not merely a linguistic transformation; it is also a bridge between cultures and ideas, deeply rooted in the need for mutual understanding among people. The core goal of translation is to promote understanding and cross-cultural exchange, enabling people from different linguistic backgrounds to achieve a resonance of ideas. As Niu Wenjun (2022) pointed out, translators must not only serve as linguistic mediators but also as interpreters of meaning. Only by doing so can the translation process be successful. Expression refers to faithfully conveying the author's intended meaning or message using language that aligns with the target audience's linguistic habits. This involves two key aspects. First, in terms of content, the translator should express only what the author clearly intended, without adding their own interpretations or distorting the original meaning. Second, the form must conform to linguistic norms, including word choice, collocations, sentence structure, and information flow, all while adhering to the general rules of writing and maintaining a style consistent with the original text (Li Changshuan, 2020: 8). In the process of expression, the translator must adjust these differences to align with the conventions of the target language. This requires the translator to have a high level of linguistic sensitivity and cultural awareness, allowing them to build a clear and fluent bridge between the source text and the translation. Expression in translation is not merely a faithful reproduction of the original but also a creative reconstruction that considers the reader's preferences, cultural context, and language style (Dang Zhengsheng, Li Nannan, & Li Qiujing, 2021). Therefore, accurate expression and creativity are critical throughout the translation process.

Adaptation refers to cases where full equivalence, such as word-for-word or sentence-by-sentence translation, is impossible or where such equivalence would undermine the translation's purpose. In these cases, the translator must employ strategies such as omission, addition, or rephrasing to effectively convey the original meaning or better achieve the translation's objectives (Li Changshuan, 2020: 8). Translation is not only a linguistic conversion but also a process of cross-cultural communication. Therefore, the translator must ensure that the translation accurately reflects the meaning of the original while achieving the same communicative effect with the target audience (Eugene, 2004, p. 120). This adaptive

strategy is not merely a simple adjustment of the text; it involves a deep understanding of the translation's purpose. The translator must consider the overall aim of the translation and the needs of the target audience when deciding how to adapt the text. While excessive flexibility in translation can sometimes distort the original meaning, flexibility and adaptation remain essential aspects of translation. Nida's translation theory emphasizes the importance of breaking free from the constraints of the source text, advising translators to learn how to be flexible and adaptive (Ye Zinan, 2019).

3. Research on the Translation of *The Road to Happiness* Under the CEA Framework

3.1 Translation Related to Comprehension

In translating transportation-themed literary works, not only are there many technical transportation terms, but there are also significant emotional expressions from the author that must be accurately interpreted. The core of comprehension lies in understanding the meanings of words and the context of the writing to translate both the words and the emotions of the author accurately, avoiding ambiguity and misinformation. Comprehension also involves understanding the differences in sentence structures caused by the cultural gap between Chinese and English. Professor Sun Haibo (2013) noted that literal translation can only be effective if there is a shared context, making equivalence between two languages achievable. Therefore, literal translation can be an ideal strategy, as it directly conveys the author's emotions. For example, in *The Road to Happiness*, the sentence: "Chinese text 1" expresses both the passage of time and the transformation of hometown roads. Literal translation can effectively convey these emotions. However, given the differences between Chinese and English sentence structures, understanding the internal logic and structure of this sentence is crucial for accurate translation. To highlight the author's reflection on the passage of time and the changes in hometown roads, The researcher translated the sentence with a parallel structure. The word "transform" was used to emphasize the action of road changes, and the final part, "Chinese text 2" was rendered into a noun phrase to emphasize the transformation. For "Chinese text 3", "Chinese text 4", and "Chinese text 5" which represent different stages of road development, the researcher translated them as "narrow path," "gravel road," and "cement-paved road" respectively, to highlight the evolution from past to present. The sentence was translated as: "Time has flown by, and the road to my hometown has transformed from a narrow path to a gravel road and finally to a cement-paved road after several reroutes and reconstructions."

3.2 Translation Related to Expression

In transportation-themed literary works, the writing often carries literary characteristics, and the author may use rhetorical devices, sentence structures, and idioms to enhance the expressive effect of the language. During translation, it is important to ensure the accurate expression of the meaning while maintaining the sentence structure (such as parallelism) and the emotional undertones of the original text. Given the differences between Chinese and English cultures, some literary expressions may lose their flavor during translation. To avoid this, literal translation strategies were chosen in this study. For example, in the sentence: "Chinese text 6" the author describes the harsh reality of muddy roads in the past. Initially, this study applied the word-for-word translation strategy for the sentence, but after careful consideration, the researcher realized that a direct translation could lead to ambiguity, failing to achieve faithful expression. The sentence was then expanded to add context, with "Chinese text 7" translated as "dust would cover you," and "Chinese text 8" translated as "mud would cling to your feet." The original parallelism, which serves to strengthen the contrast and is characteristic of literary works, was preserved. Thus, the sentence was translated as: "On sunny days, dust would cover you, and on rainy days, mud would cling to your feet."

3.3 Translation Related to Adaptation

Due to cultural differences between Chinese and English, adaptation strategies like omission, sentence restructuring, and transformation are sometimes necessary to enhance the clarity and readability of the translation for target readers. By adapting the structure, the translator can better convey the original meaning while achieving the intended communicative effect. This study applied the subject-predicate method in translating sentences with complex structures. For instance, the sentence: "Chinese text 9" in Chinese uses a cause-effect structure, where "Chinese text 10" is the cause, leading to the effect of "Chinese text 11." In Chinese, this structure is concise, with the cause presented first and then the result and it is easy to understand. While in English, it might be less clear to understand by translating according to the logical order of Chinese. The author emphasizes how poor transportation hindered rural tourism enthusiasts. Given the cultural difference, where Chinese run-on sentences or omitted subjects are common, while English requires explicit subjects, This study restructured the sentence to a subject-predicate form, with "Chinese text 12" translated as the verb and combining the two sentences to emphasize the impact of poor transportation. In this way, it is more understandable in English. The

final translation was: “In the past, poor transportation had deterred many rural tourism enthusiasts from visiting Meizi Mountain.”

4. Conclusion

This study, focusing on the transportation literary work *The Road to Happiness*, explores how to effectively engage in cross-cultural communication under the transportation development strategy using Professor Li Changshuan's CEA framework. Through an analysis of the dimensions of Comprehension, Expression, and Adaptation, it demonstrates how cultural differences can be flexibly addressed while remaining faithful to the original text, enabling the translation to naturally and smoothly convey the impact of transportation development on individual lives and social change. This study validates the applicability of the CEA framework to transportation literature translation, showing that transportation is not only an embodiment of physical infrastructure but also reflects the relationship between national development and historical changes through literature. The translation of transportation literature helps international readers understand China’s transportation strategy while promoting the international dissemination of Chinese transportation culture and building a strong national image.

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Appendix

3.1 Translation Related to Comprehension

Chinese text 1 时光飞逝，通往故乡小山村的路，从羊肠小道到砂石铺就的公路，再经历改道修成水泥路，一路沧桑，一路变迁
Chinese text 2 一路沧桑，一路变迁
Chinese text 3 羊肠小道
Chinese text 4 砂石铺就的公路
Chinese text 5 水泥路

3.2 Translation Related to Expression

Chinese text 6 晴天一身灰，雨天两脚泥，是真实写照
Chinese text 7 一身灰
Chinese text 8 两脚泥

3.3 Translation Related to Adaptation

Chinese text 9 过去因为交通不便，阻止了不少向往梅子岭的乡村旅游爱好者
Chinese text 10 因为交通不便
Chinese text 11 阻止了不少乡村旅游爱好者.
Chinese text 12 阻止