

**Zhu Xiaohan: A Translation Study on Chinese Xiqu: through the Case of
*Silang Visits His Mother***

Abstract

My dissertation investigates the English translation of Xiqu (Chinese opera), with a particular focus on *Silang Visits His Mother* as the corpus. Xiqu, as a dialogue-driven and culturally rich art form, poses unique challenges to translation due to its use of Modal Particles, body-part expressions, idioms, and other culture-specific elements. The research question of my dissertation is whether it is possible to construct and apply a systematic set of translation solutions that can faithfully convey the cultural connotations and emotional nuances embedded in Xiqu. Based on this, my dissertation aims to study the English translation of Xiqu and to explore an overall set of translation solutions that can be applied to Xiqu translation, as it would facilitate the promotion of this art form.

The theoretical background of the dissertation is functional equivalence theory, but it is seldom mentioned because translation does not require an overly theoretical model. Framework that pays attention to actual translation phenomena and is flexibly applicable is what I need. Pym's (2016a) framework of translation solutions provides the methodological basis for unifying diverse translation solutions. These theories enable a comprehensive exploration of how linguistic and cultural dimensions of Xiqu can be addressed in translation.

My dissertation employs a case study method supported by detailed example analysis. By comparing two English translations of *Silang Visits His Mother*—Sun Ping's edited version (2012) and A.C. Scott's translation (1967)—the dissertation systematically examines the translation of Modal Particles, body-part expressions, four-character idioms, and subtitles. Each case study identifies recurring translation problems and discusses a range of solutions. At the end of each case study, the findings are summarized and aligned with Pym's framework, creating a standardized typology

of translation solutions. I further supplement this framework by discussing solutions not covered in earlier case studies, ensuring a comprehensive account of translation practices in Xiqu. What's more, in this dissertation, I introduce a forward-looking perspective by examining the role of machine translation (MT) and artificial intelligence (AI) in Xiqu translation. Through a comparative analysis of human translations and outputs from MT and GPT models, the study uses a penalty-based scoring system evaluates whether AI can capture not only the semantic content but also the artistic and cultural nuances of Xiqu.

This dissertation's most significant contribution is that it presents a preliminary and comprehensive analysis of Xiqu translation, proposing an integrated Xiqu translation solution for Xiqu texts. In this dissertation, I have reviewed Xiqu translation and found that existing research primarily focuses on isolated translation issues, with no comprehensive framework summarizing translation solutions for Xiqu texts. Therefore, the overall Table "Translation solutions for Chinese Xiqu texts" represents the first attempt to propose an integrated typology of translation solutions for Xiqu. The typology I propose may serve as a mediating framework in the translation of other Xiqu operas, thus fostering the transnational circulation of Xiqu as a cultural product and enriching the Anglophone world's discursive construction of Chinese culture.

Keywords: Xiqu, translation solutions, case study, cultural translation, AI translation

Bibliography

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