

A Study on the English Translation of Shaanxi Opera Art Museum of China Commentaries from the Perspective of Eco-Translatology

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Abstract

As a vital venue for cultural communication, museums rely heavily on accurate English translations of in-house commentaries to guarantee effective cross-cultural exchange. Taking the English translated commentaries from Shaanxi Opera Art Museum of China as its research corpus, this paper conducts an analysis of museum commentaries through the linguistic, cultural and communicative dimensions, grounded in the Adaptation and Selection Theory of Eco-translatology. The study reveals that several flaws persist in certain translated commentaries, which demand further translational adaptation and selection. Corresponding revision strategies are therefore proposed in this paper to improve the quality of their English renderings and facilitate more robust cultural exchange.

Keywords

Eco-Translatology, Three-Dimensional Transformation, Shaanxi Opera Art Museum of China, Commentaries

1. Introduction

Originating in Shaanxi and Gansu provinces, Qinqiang Opera ranks among China's oldest traditional operatic genres. Distinguished by its unique theatrical expressions and profound cultural connotations, it was inscribed on China's National Intangible Cultural Heritage List in 2006. Its repertoire carries forward fine folk and theatrical traditions, mirroring the history, culture and values of Shaanxi Province. As a regional opera, Qinqiang Opera integrates local folk art, music and dance elements, depicting the local customs and lifestyles of residents in the region through theatrical performances, and offering the world a multi-faceted lens

to appreciate traditional opera and the regional culture embedded within it.

A search on CNKI with the topic term “English translation of traditional Chinese opera” yielded 80 papers published between 1981 and 2025, with a periodic peak of 11 papers released in 2021. Another search targeting “English translation of Qinqiang Opera” returned 35 papers covering the period from 2017 to 2026, hitting a periodic high of 10 papers in 2024. Meanwhile, no relevant literature was retrieved when searching the topic term “English translation of commentaries for opera museums” and “English translation of commentaries for Qinqiang Opera museums”. Shaanxi Opera Art Museum of China serves as a key cultural institution dedicated to the preservation, inheritance and popularization of Qinqiang art. As a vital medium for passing down and promoting Qinqiang, museum commentaries carry dual significance: they grant the general public access to records tracing the evolution of Qinqiang, while their English versions function as a cross-cultural bridge to introduce Chinese culture to global audiences. The value of such museum commentaries is therefore self-evident.

Drawing on Eco-translatology, this paper takes commentary texts from Shaanxi Opera Art Museum of China as its research corpus. It analyzes the English translations of these commentaries across three dimensions: the linguistic dimension, the cultural dimension and the communicative dimension. By evaluating translational quality, this study intends to advance research on museum relevant texts and boost the international dissemination of Qinqiang culture.

2. Existing Deficiencies in English Commentaries of Shaanxi Opera Art Museum of China

Nestled in Yisu Theater Cultural District beside the Bell Tower, a landmark in Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, Shaanxi Opera Art Museum of China houses a wealth of collections, including handwritten manuscripts of traditional Qinqiang scripts, historical documents, opera costumes, head ornaments, accessories, stage props for Qinqiang performances, as well as accompanying musical instruments. These exhibits fully embody the long-standing and distinctive culture of Qinqiang. Therefore, when translation acts as a medium to deliver Qinqiang culture embedded in textual commentaries to visitors from diverse cultural backgrounds, translators must comprehensively deliberate on translational strategies to break down cross-cultural barriers, accurately convey literal information and underlying cultural implications, and ultimately facilitate cultural exchange.

2.1. Data and Procedures

In February 18, 2025, the author collected bilingual corpus of approximately 2500 Chinese characters and 1500 English words at Shaanxi Opera Art Museum of China. This study explores translators' practices of selective adaptation and adaptive selection, identifies defects in the existing translations, and selects eight representative translated cases to evaluate translation quality from the perspective of Eco-translatology.

2.2. Existing Deficiencies

Field investigation at Shaanxi Opera Art Museum of China reveals that most commentaries achieve adaptive selection across the linguistic, cultural and communicative dimensions, producing target texts acceptable and intelligible to foreign visitors and facilitating cross-cultural communication. Nevertheless, several prominent problems remain:

First, three grammatical errors are detected, such as incorrect number marking in each periods, which should be revised to each period.

Second, one punctuation mistake appears. The source text “快耳悦目真秦声” is translated as “The melodious sound of Qin”, where the trailing full stop is redundant and should be removed.

Third, the English translation coverage is incomplete. For various cultural relics including musical instruments, figurines, opera scripts and role types, only main headings are translated while detailed descriptive explanations are left untranslated.

Fourth, inconsistent terminology exists in two instances: Qinqiang Opera is rendered alternately as Shaanxi Opera and Qinqiang.

This paper proposes targeted solutions to address all the above-mentioned issues.

3. Eco-Translatology and Its Application in Museum Relevant Texts

This section briefly outlines the evolution of Eco-translatology, tracing its philosophical foundation in the Adaptation and Selection Theory to its establishment as a research paradigm that examines and depicts translation from an ecological perspective, alongside an overview of relevant scholarly applications of Eco-translatology within museum relevant texts research.

3.1. The Evolution and Core Connotations of Eco-Translatology

Hu Gengshen first put forward the Translation Adaptation and Selection Theory when presenting his paper *A Preliminary Study on Translation as Adaptation and Selection* at the 3rd Asian Translators Forum in 2001. Eco-translatology emerged as an independent research paradigm built upon this theoretical framework (Hu et al., 2019). Initially, he framed Eco-translatology as a theoretical lens that draws on the core tenets and logic of Darwin’s biological theory of “adaptation and selection” to interpret and reconstruct the generative process of translated texts, which serves as the philosophical underpinning of the Adaptation and Selection Theory.

In the following years, Hu published a series of papers on Eco-translatology. In his keynote address *The Ecological Turn in Translation Studies from the Perspective of Relevant Sequences*, he further integrated the concept of “ecology” into translation scholarship. At this developmental stage, Eco-translatology was defined as an ecological research paradigm guided by ecological holism, rooted in

Eastern ecological wisdom, and grounded in the Adaptation and Selection Theory. It systematically investigates the translation ecology, textual ecology, and “translation community” ecology as well as their mutual interactions and interconnections, aiming to holistically observe and interpret the entirety of translational ecosystems and the ontology of translation theories from an ecological vantage point.

With the maturation of the Eco-translatology paradigm, the construction of Neo-ecologism came into being. In a 2016 interview published in *Foreign Languages in China*, Hu offered the latest official definition of Eco-translatology: guided by Neo-ecologism, oriented toward both the figurative and literal dimensions of translational ecology, the theory prioritizes exploring and uncovering ecological rationality and ecological implications embedded in translational activities. Its ultimate mission is to establish ecological rationality and ecological thinking as a universal worldview and methodology to govern and inform all translational practices and translation research. In essence, Eco-translatology constitutes a research paradigm that surveys and describes translation in its entirety through an ecological lens (Tao & Hu, 2016; Hu, 2006).

From the perspective of Eco-translatology and grounded in the Adaptation and Selection Theory, several core propositions can be drawn: translation constitutes a selective activity wherein translators adapt to the translational ecological environment; the translational process is an alternating and cyclic progression of translators’ adaptation and selection; the fundamental translation principle lies in multi-dimensional selective adaptation and adaptive selection; the core translation methodology refers to three-dimensional transformations; and the optimal translation is the rendering with the highest degree of integrated adaptation and selection (Hu, 2008).

3.2. A Review of Applications of Eco-Translatology in Museum Relevant Texts

A CNKI search using the topic term “Eco-translatology and English translation of museum texts” covering the period from 2015 to the present retrieved 57 relevant papers, with a periodic peak of 15 publications in 2025. Accordingly, Eco-translatology has laid a solid research foundation for studies on the English translation of museum-related texts, yet no literature has been found regarding its application to English translation of texts for the Qinqiang Opera Museum.

Shi and Zhou (2022) adopt the Eco-translatology framework and employ three-dimensional transformations to examine the problems existing in Chinese-English translations of cultural relic labels in the folk custom exhibition area of Chengdu Museum, before putting forward corresponding translation strategies. Zhou (2025) explores the fundamental principles for museum exhibit translations from the Eco-translatology perspective and proposes effective strategies to improve the quality of such translations. Li and Li (2021) discuss the guiding value of the Theory of Three-Dimensional Transformations for cultural heritage translation prac-

tice. They analyze translators' adaptation to translational ecological environments and their adaptive selection tendencies in three-dimensional transformation during translation, offering a novel perspective for cultural heritage translation research.

It can thus be concluded that Eco-translatology has produced fruitful research outcomes within the field of museum relevant texts. Nevertheless, existing research rarely addresses commentaries in drama-themed museums, with most scholarship focusing on play scripts and drama subtitle translation instead. For instance, [Zhu \(2021\)](#) takes the English translation of the Cantonese opera *Princess Chang Ping* as a case study to investigate how translators exert subjective initiative within translational ecology. [Wang and Li \(2026\)](#) analyze the adaptive transformation strategies adopted by translators in the English subtitles of the Chao opera *Sword Breaking Lovers' Bond*, and discuss how such strategies facilitate the overseas dissemination and reception of Chao opera culture.

Against this backdrop, the present study not only expands the research boundary of Eco-translatology, but also verifies the applicability and feasibility of this theoretical framework through practical museum relevant texts cases.

4. An Analysis of Three-Dimensional Transformations in English Translations of Commentaries at Shaanxi Opera Art Museum of China

From the perspective of Eco-translatology, the following chapter adopts the three-dimensional transformation approach to analyze how typical translated cases realize selective adaptation and adaptive selection, measure their degree of integrated adaptation and selection, evaluate translation quality, and put forward corresponding optimization suggestions.

4.1. Adaptive Selection and Transformation at the Linguistic Dimension

Adaptive transformation at the linguistic dimension means that translators resolve discrepancies and conflicts between the source language and target language on purely linguistic levels, including lexis, grammar, syntax, rhetoric, stylistics and textual structure. Through adaptive selection and transformation of linguistic forms, translators can produce target texts that conform to target linguistic norms and read smoothly and naturally ([Hu, 2006](#)).

As museum commentaries fall under informative text type, the accurate conveyance of information stands as the primary priority. Accordingly, translators must proactively adapt to target-language conventions. Based on thorough comprehension of the source text meaning, they select linguistic forms that align best with target-language idioms to achieve effective information transmission.

Example 1:

Source text: 其中形成的秦腔，最终发展和演变成为中国戏曲艺术苑地中的一支瑰丽之花。

Targeted text: Shaanxi Opera (Qinqiang), one of the many genres of folk Chinese opera, is developed into a magnificent genre in the garden of folk Chinese opera.

In terms of the linguistic dimension, the translated text adopts vocabulary familiar to target readers to accomplish adaptive transformation at this dimension. The core source-text image “花” is rendered into the more abstract term “genre” in the target text. This adjustment stems from the fact that the metaphor of “flower” referring to opera schools sounds far less natural and expressive in English culture than it does in Chinese. As a standard term in art studies, “genre” better accommodates the cognitive conventions of target readers.

For the phrase “艺术苑地”, the translator retains the core metaphorical frame of “garden” via literal translation, rephrasing it as “in the garden of folk Chinese opera”. This approach preserves the literary connotation of the original metaphor, in which a garden symbolizes richness, diversity and vitality. Meanwhile, it anchors the metaphor within a distinct cultural context of Chinese folk operas, rendering the figure of speech more intelligible and acceptable to English-speaking audiences. The adjective “magnificent” accurately captures the core semantic meaning of the Chinese word “瑰丽” (splendid and gorgeous).

Although the concrete image of “花” disappears in the translation, the rendering grasps the core implication of the original metaphor: this opera stands as a unique, beautiful and valuable blossom in the grand garden of arts. The translator reconstructs the metaphor with two concepts more accessible to target readers—“genre” and the frame “garden of folk Chinese opera”—thereby achieving equivalent rhetorical effects in cross-linguistic transmission.

Example 2:

Source Text: 秦朝的建立, 开启了我国历史上国家统一、中央集权的新时代; 汉朝的强盛与开拓, 使中华民族迎来了第一个发展的高峰。在此期间, 融合了诸多表演形式的“百戏”, 呈现出兼收并蓄、包罗万象之态, 成为中国文化艺术史上的奇观, 对后世秦腔艺术乃至中国戏曲艺术的形成产生了深远的影响。

Target Text: The founding of Qin dynasty started a new era of national unification and centralization in the history of China. The prosperity and development of the Han Empire brought the Chinese nation to its first peak of development. During this time, the “Acrobatics” that integrate multiple forms of performance presented an eclectic and all-inclusive state, becoming a marvelous view in the history of Chinese art and culture, which has had profound influence on Shaanxi opera in the later period and the formation of folk Chinese opera.

In terms of the linguistic dimension, the translator rearranges the syntactic structure of the source text to complete adaptive transformation at this dimension. The target text reconstructs the information flow and logical relations of the original text, which unfold in the sequence of contextual background, depiction of core phenomena and historical evaluation.

Despite restructuring scattered short clauses in the source text into integrated

sentences supplemented with subordinate clauses, the translation fully retains three core information modules—the historical significance of the Qin and Han dynasties, the features of Acrobatics, and the influences exerted by Acrobatics—while keeping their original order intact to safeguard textual integrity.

The temporal marker *During this time* establishes an explicit chronological link, situating “Acrobatics” against the backdrop of the Qin and Han dynasties and boosting textual coherence. Relative clauses introduced by *that* and non-restrictive relative clauses led by *which* tightly integrate relevant information and form an inherent logical chain covering the definition, characteristics and influences of Acrobatics, resulting in smooth textual cohesion. By recasting multi-layered logical relations of the source text into cohesive patterns consistent with target-language textual conventions, the translation realizes accurate transmission of information.

Example 3:

Source Text: 1) 深受汉代百戏、唐代梨园以及歌舞戏、参军戏等的影响, 2) 又吸收、借鉴了杂剧、弋阳腔、昆曲的艺术表现手段, 3) 经一代又一代名不见经传的民间艺人的艺术实践, 秦腔艺术 4) 形成并迅速向外发展, 5) 成为其他地区梆子声腔剧种产生的重要因素。

Target Text: Deeply affected by Han acrobatics, and Tang Liyuan musical dance, song dance, and Canjunxi, Shaanxi opera has incorporated artistic expressions like Zaju, Yiyang tune and Kung opera, through development of unknown folk artists from generation to generation, Shaanxi opera was thus formed and rapidly developed, becoming a major contribution to Bangzi Shengqiang in other areas.

At the linguistic dimension, the translation converts the implicit logical relations of the source text into explicit ones conforming to target-language expression norms through logically cohesive lexical items and syntactic structures, thereby achieving adaptive transformation at the linguistic dimension. Nevertheless, the translation contains one grammatical error that requires revision.

The original Chinese text is a typical run-on sentence with dense information, consisting of five parallel verb-object structures: 1) “深受……影响” 2) “吸收、借鉴……手段” 3) “经……实践” 4) “形成并……发展” 5) “成为……因素”. Its logical relations are primarily embodied through semantic coherence and paratactic structures, which align with the paratactic feature of Chinese language.

In contrast, English is a hypotactic language. To adapt to the textual ecology of the target language, the translation externalizes the implicit causal logic between the first four semantic segments by applying the conjunctive adverb “thus” and non-finite verb structures. It establishes a more explicit grammatical cohesion network than the original text, satisfying the rigorous formal coherence requirements of English discourse (Lian, 2010).

However, the translation suffers from a comma splice error. Two independent clauses—“Shaanxi opera has incorporated... Kung opera” and “Shaanxi opera was thus formed and rapidly developed, ... areas”—are improperly connected merely

by a comma. This violates English grammatical rules; the two independent clauses should be separated by a full stop instead of a comma.

4.2. Adaptive Selection and Transformation at the Cultural Dimension

Adaptive transformation at the cultural dimension means translators focus on conveying and interpreting the cultural connotations embedded in both source and target languages throughout translation. Its core lies in acknowledging the inherent disparities in nature and substance between source and target cultures, so as to prevent misinterpretation of the source text from the standpoint of target-culture norms. Beyond linguistic conversion, translators must proactively adapt to the entire cultural system to which the source text belongs (Hu, 2006).

Museum commentaries abound with culture-loaded words carrying rich cultural implications. Translators are required to accurately grasp the cultural connotations of the original text, identify cultural gaps between the two linguistic communities, and make translational choices that preserve authentic cultural meanings while remaining intelligible to English-speaking visitors.

Example 4:

Source Text: 因演出时采用梆子击节，又名梆子腔，系中国戏曲四大声腔之一。

Target Text: As the genre features bangzi (woodblock) as its accompanying instruments, from which it derives its other name, Bangzi opera. It is considered one of China's Four Great Characteristic Melodies.

Bangzi (woodblock) are commonly crafted from red sandalwood or mahogany, while jujube wood is adopted in certain regions. Hollow and rectangular in shape, a standard bangzi set consists of two wooden sticks of unequal lengths. Musicians strike the longer stick with the shorter one to produce crisp, staccato tones with strong penetrating power. Within the Qinqiang opera band, the drum director is in charge of manipulating the bangzi; by varying the tempo, volume and intensity of strikes, they govern the emotional rhythm of the entire performance. The term "woodblock" is defined in *The Oxford Companion to Music* as follows: The orchestral wood block of the West is generally made from teak or another hardwood. The dimensions of this instrument vary, although it is either a rectangular or cylindrical block of wood with one or sometimes two longitudinal cavities. It is played by striking it with a stick, which produces a sharp crack.

From the cultural dimension, adaptive selection at this dimension is realized through the addition of annotations. The percussion instrument 梆子 is transliterated as "bangzi" to indicate that it is no ordinary wooden block or Western musical instrument, but a unique artifact with a specific Chinese name and cultural background. Meanwhile, the translator tactfully draws on the familiar target-culture concept "woodblock" to convey its core physical feature of being crafted from hardwood and its basic sound-production mechanism via striking, building a cognitive bridge for visitors. Placing "woodblock" in parentheses clarifies that it is not an exact equivalent but merely an approximate analogy and functional de-

scription. This approach leverages existing target-language concepts to lower comprehension barriers while reserving room for the uniqueness of bangzi, eliminating misunderstandings that would arise from equating it entirely with Western woodblocks. It strikes a balance between preserving source cultural information and ensuring intelligibility for visitors.

Example 5:

Source Text: 在其孕育发展过程中，深受周秦歌舞、汉代百戏、唐代梨园乐舞以及参军戏等艺术形式的影响，是经过长期交流、融合而形成的戏曲剧种。

Target Text: With a long history, it was deeply influenced by artistic forms such as Zhou and Qin dance, Han acrobatics, and Tang Liyuan musical dance and Canjunxi, which is a genre of opera formed by long-term exchange and integration.

Suggested Target Text: With a long history, it was deeply influenced by artistic forms such as Zhou and Qin dynasties dance, Han acrobatics, and Tang dynasty Liyuan musical dance and Canjunxi, which is a genre of opera formed by long-term exchange and integration.

From the cultural dimension, adaptive selection at this dimension is achieved through lexical specification and supplementary explanation.

Essential Records of Emperor Wen of the Han Dynasty records: “Baixi originated from the Manyan performances of the Qin and Han dynasties. Later, various skills emerged, including tightrope walking, knife swallowing, fire walking, pole climbing and others.” It can be seen that “Baixi” is a general term for folk performing arts of the Han ethnic group, covering acrobatics, horn grappling, magic, recreational games and so on, with acrobatics as the core, dating back at least to the Qin and Han dynasties.

There exists no equivalent term for “百戏” in the target culture. The translator narrows its semantic scope and renders it as the closest subordinate category “acrobatics” to fit within the cognitive framework of target readers.

This exhibition panel appears at the early stage of the exhibition, and visitors possess uneven prior knowledge. As museum commentaries serve a general public audience with universal accessibility, the word “dynasty” should be appended after the dynastic name “Han” to guarantee accurate information transmission and prevent foreign visitors from misinterpreting the single word “Han”. By the same token, dynastic names in “Zhou and Qin dance” and “Tang Liyuan musical dance” are uniformly supplemented with “dynasty”, resulting in “Zhou and Qin dynasties dance” and “Tang dynasty Liyuan musical dance”.

Canjunxi is an ancient Chinese operatic form. During the Sixteen Kingdoms period, Shi Le of Later Zhao ordered an artist to dress up as a corrupt military advisor named Canjun, while another artist teased him onstage, which evolved into a fixed performing form. The mocked character was called “Canjun”, and the teasing one “Canggu”; the two roles delivered humorous dialogues and skits. By the late Tang Dynasty, it developed into multi-actor performances with female roles, and was also known as “zaju” in the Song Dynasty.

In the translation, “参军戏” is transliterated to retain its cultural connotations,

with a non-restrictive relative clause added to clarify that it is a type of traditional drama, making dynamic adaptation to the cognition of target-language visitors.

Example 6:

Source Text: 百戏杂陈见黄公

Target Text: Acrobatics of liquor sellers:

Source Text: 《东海黄公》

Target Text: LIQUOR SELLERS OF EAST CHINA SEA

Suggested Target Text: Mr. Huang (THE SORCERER of EAST CHINA SEA)

At the cultural dimension, the translation fails to conduct adaptive selection and selective adaptation concerning the core cultural connotations behind the figure 黄公 (Huang Gong), which necessitates revision to fulfill adaptive transformation at the cultural dimension.

Volume 3 of *Miscellaneous Records of the Western Capital* written by Ge Hong of the Eastern Jin Dynasty records: “Huang Gong, a native of the East China Sea, mastered sorcery in his youth, capable of subduing snakes and tigers. He wore a scarlet gold dagger and bound his hair with crimson silk ribbons. He could conjure clouds and mist the moment he stood up, and create mountains and rivers while seated. In his old age, he grew feeble and worn out, and excessive drinking rendered him unable to wield his magic any longer. Towards the end of the Qin Dynasty, a white tiger appeared in the East China Sea. Huang Gong took his scarlet dagger to subdue the beast, yet his sorcery failed, and he was killed by the tiger. Folk residents of the Sanfu region turned this tale into a folk performance, which emperors of the Han Dynasty incorporated into wrestling competitions.”

It can be seen that the translation fixates on the minor plot of “excessive drinking”, elevates and distorts this detail into the character’s core occupational identity, completely strips away his core cultural attribute as a sorcerer, and erases Huang Gong’s identity as a legendary historical figure with a specific proper name. This translation makes no adaptation to the unique cultural image of Huang Gong embedded in the source culture. It replaces a culturally specific figure with profound connotations from the source culture with an ordinary occupational concept rooted in the target culture, resulting in severe distortion and loss of core cultural information. Such rendering fails to meet the requirements of adaptive transformation at the cultural dimension, whose goals are to transmit cultural connotations and bridge cultural gaps.

In classical Chinese, the honorific character 公 (Gong) is used to address elderly men, people of high social standing, or virtuous figures. It carries an implication of respect for the person referred to. Therefore, the free translation with annotation approach is recommended: Mr. Huang (the sorcerer of the East China Sea). This version retains both his given name and the honorific title, clarifies his identity as a sorcerer, and facilitates effective cross-cultural communication.

4.3. Adaptive Selection and Transformation at the Communicative Dimension

Adaptive transformation at the communicative dimension requires translators to

prioritize the conveyance of communicative intentions of both source and target languages throughout the translation process. This type of transformation demands translators not only transfer linguistic information and deliver cultural connotations, but also shift their focus to the communicative level to guarantee that the communicative intentions embedded in the source text can be fully realized in the target translation (Hu, 2006).

Museum commentaries carry educational and enlightening functions and offer aesthetic guidance to visitors. To achieve qualified translation, translators must first thoroughly interpret the underlying intentions, implied meanings, emotional tones and functional purposes of the original text. Second, they need to comprehensively adapt to the linguistic norms, cultural customs, social contexts, characteristics of target readers and practical textual scenarios within the target translational ecology. On the premise of accurately conveying core information, translators should adopt expressions compatible with target cultural norms and contextual logic, so as to evoke equivalent comprehension and emotional experience among target readers as those perceived by source-language audiences.

Example 7:

Source Text: 合“乐、舞、诗”于一体的“周南”“秦风”，活跃的角抵表演，寓“谏”于乐的俳优戏等，均成为后世秦腔艺术诞生于秦地的重要因素。

Target Text: “Zhounan” and “Qin Style” that integrate “music, dance and poems”, the active Sumo wrestling, and the artists in a pantomime that put “admonition” in pleasure, have become major factors contributing to the birth of Shaanxi opera in the later period.

In terms of the communicative dimension, the translation abandons literal rendering and exclusive cultural forms, and selects appropriate vocabulary to adapt to the target translational ecological environment, thus accomplishing adaptive transformation at the communicative dimension. *Records of Strange Tales* records that in remote antiquity, Chiyou “had blades and halberds growing at his temples and wore horns on his head. When he fought Xuanyuan, he used his horns to charge opponents, who dared not stand their ground against him.” This horn-charging combat evolved into a wrestling game where two contestants locked horns against each other. During the Qin Dynasty, horn-charging shows were introduced into the imperial court.

According to the definition of *sumo wrestling* in the Oxford Dictionary: a style of wrestling (=a fighting sport) originally from Japan, in which each man tries to defeat the other either by pushing him outside of a special ring or by forcing him to touch the ground with a part of his body other than the bottom part of the foot. Translating “角抵表演” as *sumo wrestling* evokes a widely recognized, visually striking concept of grappling in Western culture, instantly activating readers’ mental schema of heavyweight athletes engaging in strength-based competitive performances. Despite discrepancies in historical origins and specific rules, horn-charging shows and Japanese sumo share strong functional similarities in their core traits: strength-driven combat, performativity, ornamental appeal and mass

popularity. While this translation sacrifices literal accuracy and blurs the unique historical identity of ancient Chinese horn-charging performances by equating them with Japanese sumo, it prioritizes the effective transmission of the core communicative function—presenting a popular grand-scale strength-based performing art—within the target linguistic and cultural ecology.

The term 俳优戏 (Paiyouxi) refers to ancient performances centered on humor, buffoonery and mimicry, staged by court jesters and comic entertainers known as paiyou. The translation adopts *pantomime* as its equivalent. Western pantomime, especially the traditional British pantos, differs in form yet aligns closely in core features: slapstick comedy, physical acting, binary roles of heroes and villains, mass entertainment, and mild satire or moral lessons targeting social realities. These traits match the core functions of Paiyouxi, namely recreational value, performative quality and implicit social commentary.

In summary, translators borrow two highly recognizable Western concepts with parallel functions—sumo wrestling and pantomime—to activate visitors' cognitive schemas. Though this strategy sacrifices some formal details and historical uniqueness of source cultural, it maximizes the efficient dissemination and reception of these art forms' essential nature, functions, and their roles in the origin of Qinqiang Opera within the target cultural ecology.

Example 8:

Source Text: 在中国戏曲音乐的两种体制曲牌体和板腔体中，秦腔最早创用了板腔体，也称板式变化体。

Target Text: Of the two styles of Chinese opera, namely, Qupai and Banqiang, Shaanxi Opera is the earliest to use Banqiang, which is thus also called Banqiang.

Suggested Target Text: Of the two styles of Chinese opera, namely, Qupai and Banqiang, Shaanxi Opera is the earliest to use Banqiang, which is thus also called Banqiang Rhythmic Variation Style.

From the communicative dimension, the translation adopts precise vocabulary and syntactic structures to complete adaptive transformation at this dimension. However, it fails to convey the communicative intention behind the term 板式变化体, which necessitates revision.

According to the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, the definition of “style” reads: a typical way of writing, painting etc. that is used by a particular person or during a particular period of time. Within English musical and theatrical contexts, “style” is the most prevalent and intelligible term for describing diverse musical structural systems (such as strophic style and through-composed style) or artistic schools. The word “styles” used in the translation accurately conveys the concept of musical systems. The syntactic structure *Of the two styles... , namely, A and B...* constructs a clear classification framework for target visitors, defines A and B as formal names of musical systems in advance, and reduces visitors' difficulty in comprehending the transliterated terms Qupai and Banqiang.

The non-restrictive relative clause introduced by which is intended to express the synonymous relationship that 板式变化体 is another name for 板腔体. Vis-

itors can anticipate that an alternative designation will follow the relative pronoun, yet simply using “Bangqiang” may cause confusion. It is suggested to adopt the literal translation *Banqiang Rhythmic Variation Style*. It is suggested to adopt the literal translation *Banqiang Rhythmic Variation Style*. It is suggested to adopt the literal translation *Banqiang Rhythmic Variation Style*. This rendering can not only convey the core connotation of the rhythmic variation style, which creates vocal melodies through varying diverse rhythmic modes, but also fulfill the communicative intention of indicating that the Banqiang style does have an alternative name.

In general, rather than engaging in rigid word-for-word translation, the translator thoroughly grasps the original communicative intention that Chinese opera music falls into two major systems, constructs a clear classification framework and transmits core factual information, and selects expressions compatible with the target translational ecology, thereby achieving accurate information conveyance and efficient cross-cultural communication.

5. Conclusion

Based on the three-dimensional transformation framework of Eco-translatology, this study conducts a systematic analysis of the English translations of commentary texts in Shaanxi Opera Art Museum of China. Guided by the translation principles of “adaptation and selection”, it proposes targeted optimization strategies for existing translation problems, which can provide references for the English translation of commentary texts in opera-themed museums and the international dissemination of traditional culture. Nevertheless, this study has several limitations. First, the research samples are relatively limited. This study only focuses on the commentary texts of the Shaanxi Opera Art Museum of China without incorporating translation materials from other opera museums, which restricts the generalizability of the research conclusions. Second, this study adopts a qualitative text analysis method, focusing on textual three-dimensional transformation methods and translators’ adaptive selection. Without quantitative empirical data concerning audience reception and communication effects, the research method is relatively unitary. Third, this study mainly explores the optimization of static translated texts and the practice of three-dimensional transformation at the textual level, while neglecting external translational ecological factors such as new-media communication and dynamic cross-cultural communication scenarios, resulting in insufficient discussion on translation adaptation in complex communication contexts.

This study clarifies the core criteria and practical approaches for cultural museum translation based on the three-dimensional transformation methods, possessing both theoretical and practical significance for the optimization of museum commentary translation and cross-cultural communication of traditional opera culture. In the Adaptation and Selection Theory, the linguistic, cultural and communicative dimensions are intertwined and mutually integrated to form a holistic

translational ecological system, which puts forward comprehensive professional requirements for translators.

Theoretically, this study verifies the applicability and feasibility of Eco-translatology in the translation of intangible cultural heritage texts represented by opera museum commentaries. It remedies the research gap in existing cultural museum translation studies, which predominantly focus on general cultural relic texts while neglecting opera-specific commentaries, thereby expanding the application scope of Eco-translatology. Furthermore, this study elaborates the collaborative mechanism of three-dimensional transformation, improves the theoretical analytical framework for opera cultural museum translation, and provides theoretical implications for subsequent researches on the translation of similar intangible cultural heritage texts.

Practically, this study defines the core competence requirements and operational guidelines for translators engaging in cultural museum translation from three dimensions. At the linguistic dimension, translators are required to master bilingual formal rules proficiently and make creative breakthroughs in linguistic constraints on the premise of conforming to normative expressions in specific translational ecological environments. At the cultural dimension, translators need to deeply understand Sino-Western cultural connotations, values and thinking modes, bridge cultural vacancies in opera texts, and accurately convey the cultural essence of Qinqiang Opera as intangible cultural heritage. At the communicative dimension, translators should precisely grasp the original communicative intentions, predict and regulate the pragmatic effects of target texts, and maintain an optimal balance between faithfulness to the original textual spirit and adaptation to the target linguistic and cultural context. Accordingly, competent translators must solidify bilingual proficiency and cross-cultural literacy to adapt to complex translational ecological environments and guarantee high-quality translation output.

In conclusion, this study contributes to improving the English translation quality of Shaanxi Opera Art Museum of China commentaries and reducing misunderstandings in cross-cultural communication. It provides practical paradigms for the English translation of opera-themed cultural museum texts, facilitates the effective international dissemination of Qinqiang Opera culture, and promotes the cross-cultural exchange and inheritance of outstanding traditional Chinese opera culture.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, J.Y. Li and X.Y. Wang; methodology, J.Y. Li and X.Y. Wang; software, J.Y. Li and X.Y. Wang; validation, J.Y. Li and X.Y. Wang; formal analysis, J.Y. Li and X.Y. Wang; investigation, J.Y. Li and X.Y. Wang; resources, J.Y. Li and X.Y. Wang; data curation, J.Y. Li and X.Y. Wang; writing—original draft preparation, J.Y. Li and X.Y. Wang; writing—review and editing, J.Y. Li and X.Y. Wang; visualization, J.Y. Li and X.Y. Wang; supervision, J.Y. Li and X.Y. Wang; project administration, J.Y. Li and X.Y. Wang; funding acquisition, J.Y. Li and

X.Y. Wang. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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