Abstract

When translating musicals from one culture to another, a translator’s role is to convert the text for its stage representation in a different context. However, during the process from this translated text to it finally being performed on stage, changes are inevitable. Issues surrounding the nature of such changes, the reasons for which they are made, and their resulting effects, have hitherto been little researched. The present study seeks to explore such issues through an examination of the ways in which the development of the translated text is shaped by interactions between the various stakeholders including professional translators, fans and production team members, i.e. the director and actors, as well as the audience themselves. Employing some of the major concepts of Actor Network Theory as the principal theoretical framework, together with a case study approach combining textual analysis and empirical studies, this project focuses on Putonghua translations of Western musicals in the Chinese mainland. More specifically, through investigating three of the most recent and professionally translated and performed Western musicals: I love you, you’re perfect, now change (USA), Spin (Finland) and Mamma Mia! (UK), it intends to show how differing stakeholder perspectives on issues of performability and reception are negotiated to produce a commercially successful translation product.
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# Table of Contents

Declaration i  
Abstract ii  
Acknowledgements iii  
Table of Contents iv  

**Chapter 1. Introduction**  
1. Research topic  
1.1 Translating musicals: different approaches required  
1.1.2 The research objectives  
1.2 The emergence and development of the translation of Western musicals on the Chinese mainland  
1.2.1 A novel form from the West  
1.2.2 Testing the waters in translation  
1.2.3 ‘For market, for audience’  
1.3 The Genre of Musicals: a Consumer-oriented Popular Art Entertainment  
1.3.1 A form of multi-semiotic popular arts entertainment for a wider audience  
1.3.2 The commercially driven consumer orientation  
1.3.3 The musical libretto: demands on the translator  
1.4 Scholarly research on theatrical performance and libretto  
1.4.1 Text and Performance: a collaborative translation practice  
1.4.2 Singability  
1.5 Structure of the dissertation  

**Chapter 2. The Theoretical Framework and Methodology**  
2.1 A brief introduction to ANT  
2.1.1 Both human and non-human ‘actors’ and ‘actants’ have agency  
2.1.2 The ‘non-human actant’  
2.1.3 The connections: everyone and everything exists in relation with others  
2.1.4 The dynamism: mediators and their interactions make things happen  
2.1.5 The concept of ‘translation’  
2.2 The applications of ANT to translation studies  
2.3 Applying ANT to my case studies for the translation of musicals
Chapter 5. Interacting with the Stakeholders: case studies and audience surveys

5.1 Case studies of the Chinese translation of three Western musicals
5.1.1 ILY: negotiations between the translator, the director and the cast
5.1.1.1 The influence of ‘Habitus’
5.1.1.2 The cast and the translation forum
5.1.2 Spin: negotiations between the translator and the cast
5.1.2.1 Negotiating textual priorities
5.1.2.2 The stages of persuasion
5.1.2.3 Negotiating differences of expertise: the role of consumer orientation
5.1.2.4 Stakeholders’ creative adjustments
5.1.3 MM: the audience’s involvements
5.1.3.1 Encouraging the audience’s active participation
5.1.3.2 Reacting to the audience’s feedback

5.2 Audience survey
5.2.1 Overview
5.2.2 The design
5.2.3 The respondents
5.2.4 The findings
5.2.4.1 The demand for surtitles
5.2.4.2 The importance of storylines
5.2.4.3 The language difficulties when listening
5.2.4.4 The pursuit for ‘Original sauce and flavour’
5.2.4.5 Stylistic features
5.2.4.6 The Chinese elements
Conclusion

Chapter 6. Conclusion
6.1 The main views and summary
6.1.1 The main views
6.1.2 Summary of the findings
6.2 Originality and contribution
6.2.1 An under-researched topic
6.2.2 Collaborative translations and their varieties in practice
6.2.3 A new approach employing ANT and its modifications
6.2.4 The diagram for the analysis of musicals’ translation
6.3 Limitations
6.3.1 Follow the ‘actant’
6.3.2 The ‘non-human actant’
6.3.3 The audience survey
6.4 Future research suggestions
6.5 Implications
6.6 Concluding remarks

Bibliography

List of Diagram, Charts, and Tables
Diagram. The interactions between the translator and the other stakeholders/consumers in the translation of musicals, from the perspective of ANT
Chart 1. Survey 1: The preferred forms of performances
Chart 2. Survey 2: The preferred forms of performances
Chart 3. Survey 3: The preferred forms of performances
Table 1. The respondents’ top two rankings in order of importance for the main aspects of musicals
Chart 4. Survey 1 and 2: Ease of comprehension
Chart 5. Survey 1: Causes of the difficulties
Table 2 The respondents’ top two rankings, in order of importance, for the stylistic features of the libretto
Chart 6. Three surveys: Compatibility of the Chinese elements

Appendices
Appendix I. Interview questions
Appendix II. Online survey questionnaires
Appendix III. Table of responses from all three online surveys
Appendix IV. Quotes from interviews in Chinese
Appendix V. The pilot audience survey

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