

[Translation Studies]

# Cultural Memories and Translations of Zhuang Liao Songs

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**Abstract:** Rooted in ancient Zhuang civilization with unique lyrics and tones, Zhuang Liao Songs have described Zhuang people's life and work for generations. As the collective cultural memory of the Zhuang nationality, Liao Songs have great values in literature, arts, history, folklore, and culture. They were listed in Chinese National Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2008, with their multi-functions of moralizing ideologies, edifying virtues, regulating behavior, and boosting the local economy. The integrative study of memory and its translation has received increasing attention from researchers of intangible cultural heritage. This paper aims to analyze the cultural memory of Zhuang Liao Songs and their intra-lingual and inter-lingual translations for the acceptability and accuracy of English translation in the era of "excellent Chinese culture going out"; to ensure the high-quality translation and dissemination of Zhuang Liao Songs.

**Keywords:** Liao Songs; cultural memory; intralingual translation; interlingual translation

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## 1. Introduction

Zhuang Liao songs are mainly popular in Pingguo, Tiandong, and Tianyang counties in the middle reach of Youjiang River in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, Mashan, and Dahua Yao Autonomous Counties in the Hongshui River Basin, and Wuming County in the Yongjiang River Basin, with the central area in Pingguo County. More than 100 administrative villages and more than 1300 natural villages are concentrated in Matou, Guohua, Taiping, Yewei, Xin'an, Haicheng, Tonglao, Jiancheng, Pozao, and Sitang in Pingguo County. On June 7, 2008, Zhuang Liao songs were listed in the second batch of the national intangible cultural heritage lists approved by the State Council.

The author of this article went to Liao Songs Fair on the slope of Yexu town, Pingguo County, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region on April 24, 2021, and observed the Liao songs duet contest carried out among the Zhuang people; she was told, "We are singing Liao Songs in antiphonal style." Through conversations in Man-

darin with Zhuang people, the author soon discovered that Lu Shunhong, the director of Pingguo Liao Songs Association, translated Zhuang people's dialect into Mandarin for her. She asked two Zhuang female Liao Songs practitioners, "Why did you two come for the fair from Tiandong county, 100 miles away from Pingguo?" They replied, "We like singing Liao Songs since, in our childhood, that is part of our lives, no matter how far it is, we would come for it." Therefore, the author of this article was puzzled by their earnest wish to go for Liao Songs Fair and feel it is interesting to explore the practices now openly performed in Pingguo.

The Zhuang nationality is the most populous ethnic minority in China, with over 18 million people. However, English-language literature on Zhuang Liao Songs and the Zhuang people is sparse compared to other ethnic groups in China. English language research on Zhuang Liao Songs includes David Holm's (2013, 2008, 2004) analysis of the words of Liao Songs and the Zhuang writing system. QinJin Dun and John Widman's (2012) investigation into two song fairs considering tourism and tradition in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. In comparison, many volumes in Chinese literature on Zhuang Liao Songs focus primarily on the singing practice as folk culture. For instance, the Chinese-language monograph entitled *Zhuang Liao Songs* includes Nong Minjian and Tan Zhibiao (2005), Luo Hantian (2009), Qin Naichang (1997), Zhou Yanxian and Lu Lianzhi (2012), Wang Xiaohui and Wangzhe (2020). Few previous studies have ever been conducted on Zhuang Liao Songs from the perspectives of the cultural landscape. This study explores the cultural memories of Pingguo Zhuang Liao Songs from the landscape anthropological perspectives of "Place" and "Space". By adopting the multiple participants' approaches as an example of observing the Liao Songs practiced in the song fair of Yexu town, we see multiple actors – including men and women, officials, scholars, business persons, song contest practitioners, participants – all involved in Zhuang Liao Songs fair. In contemporary Zhuang society, they are familiar with the modernist framework and actively seek to place their practice within it.

Having performed the anthropological fieldwork in Pingguo county since 2019, participating in fieldwork observations, snowball interviews with the government officers, and residents in the villages, researchers have studied on Liao Songs from multidisciplinary fields, analyzing the official documents bibliographic references, and attending some cultural festivals or performances. This paper adopts Hironao Kawai's (2016) division of "theories on the construction of place" and "theories on production of space" in analyzing the cultural landscape and memory of the Zhuang Liao Songs in Pingguo county. Special attention has been paid to the tension between the government's campaign in the landscape construction and the conservation of the "space", on digging the cultural memory of the local people in the community to discover the "place" they construct.

## 2. "Place" and "Space" of Cultural Memory

### 2.1 *Cultural memory*

Since 1900, the interdisciplinary studies on memory and its numerous manifestations have been on the rise, following the phenomenon of "turn to memory", notable scholars are Aby Warburg, Arnold Zweig, Deane-Cox, Emile Durkheim, Erll, Astrid, Frederick Bartlett, Henri Bergson, Karl Mannheim, Maurice Halbwachs, Sigmund Freud, and Walter Benjamin. Based upon Maurice Halbwachs's theory on collective memory (1950), Jan Assmann (1992) proposed the concept of cultural memory. Cultural memory is defined as "the interplay of

present and past in socio-cultural contexts” (Erl 2008). Cultural memory studies range from individual acts of remembering in a social context to group memory to national memory with its “invented traditions”. Maurice Halbwachs (1950) held that memory could not be entirely individual; collective contexts frequently shape it. Halbwachs classified cultural memory into levels, i. e. , the first level is that people remember in socio-cultural contexts. The second level of cultural memory refers to the symbolic order, the media, institutions, and practices by which social groups construct a shared past. Thus, the concept of cultural memory has opened the way to study these processes at a collective level.

## 2.2 *Cultural memory of Pingguo Zhuang Liao Songs*

History is a version of the past. Besides, cultural heritage, which helps shape a collective and national identity among ethnic groups, has recently aroused interest in cultural memory studies. Shared identity and community constructed by various activities to foster the collective memories in the administration of all levels have been paid more attention. Activities that unite the local people together in commemorations should bring and keep together minority groups and individuals. The collective memory of Zhuang culture, encoded in the cultural material of Liao Songs, is handed down in an ongoing dynamic inter-textual way.

On June 7, 2008, Liao Songs of the Zhuang ethnic group were listed in the second batch of national intangible cultural heritages. A kind of folk song of the Zhuang ethnic group, Liao Songs, with unique artistic ideas and methods of expression, are mainly distributed in 6 counties in Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region like Dahua, Duan, Mashan, Pingguo, Tiandong, Tianyang, and Wuming, as the representative of Zhuang culture and an encyclopedia of Zhuang society. Zhuang people express their thoughts and feelings about their life and work in singing Liao Songs, which cover architectural techniques, carving art, and ritual customs of the Zhuang ethnic group.

The largest ethnic group in China with a population of 15,721,956 (statistics in 2021, <http://www.gxzf.gov.cn>), the Zhuang nationality have survived and thrived mainly in the Pearl River Basin, South China from ancient times, including Lianshan Zhuang and Yao Autonomous County of Guangdong Province in the east, Beibu Gulf in the south, a vast area from the southwest to the Sino-Vietnamese border, Wenshan Zhuang and Miao Autonomous Prefecture of Yunnan Province in the west, Congjiang County in Guizhou Province in the north, with high mountains connected with the Yungui Plateau in the northwest. Its distinctive subtropical climate is rainy and hot in summer, which is beneficial to the formation of biodiversity, thus providing ideal conditions for human origin. The natural environment and specific mode of production in this area enable indigenous people in the Pearl River Basin, the ancestors of Zhuang nationality, to create unique Zhuang culture and its characteristics during the long history of social development. Located in the intersection of cultural exchanges between the Central Plains and Southeast Asia, South China, and Southwest provinces, the Zhuang nationality has formed the characteristics of openness and integration in the collision and integration with other national cultures. Thus, a pluralistic structure with Lingnan Yue culture as the main body has formed.

The Zhuang nationality and ancestors are good at singing songs, which enjoyed a high reputation for their unique form, rhythm, and style. Zhuang people have regular singing festival activities such as March the Third, folk song fairs, Nanning International Folk Song Art Festival, etc. Singing songs could be traced back to the social activities after farm work in the villages and the sacrificial activities in the clan-tribal era. Zhuang people

created their Liao songs and inherited them generation after generation, and Liao songs have been the collective memory in Zhuang ethnic groups. As a kind of social fashion, those who are good at singing Liao songs will win the honor of the general public in Zhuang society.

### 2.3 “Place” and “Space” perspectives

In anthropological analysis, “place” focuses on how local people give cultural significance to the surrounding environment, and how people’s daily activities build a landscape; at the same time, “space” considers how academics, entrepreneurs, designers, and other leading actors in cultural representation express local culture, and how such representation influences the social production of space (Hirsch & O’Hanlon 1995). Tilley (1997) assumed that “place” is constructed by people’s experiences, feelings, and thoughts, while “space” is a resource sphere created artificially for a particular purpose. In Pingguo County, the “place” perspective focuses on the local people’s perception of the Zhuang Liao songs. They feel happy to go for song fairs to sing in antiphonal style, make friends or choose their favorite spouse in the singing songs, publicize the Communist Party’s policies and principles in the form of Liao songs, and relax after hard work. Singing Liao songs has been a social activity in the folk of blessing and entertainment. All these daily routine activities construct cultural memories. The “space” perspective considers how administrations of all levels, scholars, entrepreneurs, and the local Zhuang people who are the main participants of the Liao song fairs and all kinds of Liao song competitions held in the local towns and villages; and how the local people’s endeavors promote the cultural tourism out of singing Liao songs for social and economic development.

#### 2.3.1 “Place”

“Place” indicates people’s daily-life stage where the sense of belonging and social memory is constructed and shared through kinship and community relations (Kawai 2013). From the “place” perspective, Pingguo County belongs to Baise City of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. It is located in the middle reaches of Youjiang River in the southwest of Guangxi, with Wuming and Mashan County in the east, Long’an and Tian counties in the south, Tiandong County in the west, and Bama and Dahua Yao Autonomous County in the north. There are mainly Zhuang, Han, and Yao nationalities in Pingguo County, and Miao, Dong, Molo, Hui, Yi, Shui, Gelo, Manchu, Mongolian, Tujia, Buyi, and other nationalities. From 2011 to 2014, Pingguo was selected as one of the “Top 100 Counties and Cities with the Most Regional Power of Small and Medium-sized Cities in China” and one of the “Top 100 Counties and Cities with Comprehensive Strength of Small and Medium-sized Cities in China”, all these honors indicate that Pingguo County is an economically developed county, with rich cultural heritage and unique landscape.

In Pingguo county, Zhuang people learned to sing Liao songs when they were children; people love to sing Liao songs, which has been an indispensable part of their lives. The unique natural geographical environment and social customs of singing songs make Zhuang people regard Liao songs singing as a passionate way to express their ethnic identities and social identities in all the aspects of their social life. Singing Liao songs, which is easy for Zhuang people to remember and acquire as the same tune and melody are repeated, again and again, has become an institutionalized way of life for most Zhuang people in Pingguo, due to the conventional practice and values of selecting lover via singing songs in antiphonal style, people sing songs to express their appreciation and gratitude to life, and the belief that those who are skillful in singing songs would gain public honor in the com-

munity. Zhuang people hold dear the educational and aesthetic values and functions of Liao songs in various social and cultural activities, thus promoting the socialization of singing activities and the singing of ideology. Singing songs has become a major part of the life of the Zhuang nationality, and it is considered one of the effective ways to mediate the general public's interests and a symbol of united ethnic identity in the imagined cultural community. No wonder there is also the saying that Pingguo is a sea of songs, and the song fair is its robust performance.

### 2.3.2 "Space"

Nora (1989) pioneered connecting memory to physical, tangible locations globally known and incorporated as a place of memory. Every memory we try to reproduce becomes a "present past" (Terdiman 1993: 13). The impractical desire for recalling what is gone forever brings to the surface a feeling of nostalgia, noticeable in many aspects of daily life but most specifically in cultural products. On the one hand, the "Space" perspective considers how government officials, academics, entrepreneurs, and designers who are the main actors in the cultural representation of the Pingguo Zhuang Liao songs, express local culture after being inscribed on the heritage list in 2008; and how their efforts in promoting the cultural tourism lead to the production of the landscape for social and economic development. In Pingguo Zhuang landscape, the "place" perspective focuses on the local people's perception of singing Liao Songs, not only the traditional five long songs and one short song but also the up-dated social events such as national safety, birth control policy, drug control, the socialist core values, Chinese traditional medicine, etc.; on local people's eagerness to go in for singing in antiphonal style in various Liao Song Fairs held in different villages and towns; on the endeavors that the Liao Song inheritors cultivate the next generations to sing Liao Songs in their training centers; on writers publish their novels written in the Zhuang language; on the international communication with the foreign counterparts and scholars in the relative seminar and singing competition. All these daily routine activities construct the "Space" of Pingguo Zhuang Liao songs.

On the other hand, in Pingguo County, the "Space" perspective would focus on the tension between the representation of Liao songs from the adults and the younger generation. Inscribed on the provincial Heritage List indicates the potential promise of economic benefit and nationwide reputation. The governments at all levels have shown their great enthusiasm towards promoting the Zhuang Liao songs to boost the local economy in various platforms that culture build. In the wake of ethnic, cultural heritage conservation, which has been the precious collective memories of old days when people lived simple, and there were not many entertainments, nor ways of access to the outside world, many grown-ups and the old generation prefer to go in for Liao song fairs, to sing Liao songs with pairs, especially in the times of cultural heritage conservation, traditional Liao songs have good time presenting its original sound. Instead, the younger generation, exposed to the beautiful outside world via the internet and modern scientific technologies, have little interest in learning and inheriting the Liao songs.

In conclusion, the cultural memory of Liao songs has been constructed by the daily routine activities and singing practices from the local communities and governments of all levels. The "place" perspective focuses on the local people's perception of Liao song singing. In contrast, the "space" perspective considers how the government pushes the limits to produce the song fairs for further development in society and the economy. More specifically, Pingguo Zhuang Liao songs could be viewed as the design product co-worked by the government, media, academics, and the local Zhuang people, and the quotidian construction of local people's routine venues at the same time.

### 3. Translations of Pingguo Zhuang Liao Songs

The classical literature culture of Guangxi has its unique artistic culture and ideological and cultural characteristics of ethnic minorities. It is of great significance to translate the excellent parts of this classic literature and cultural products into foreign languages, which will help show Guangxi's diverse ethnic minority cultures to the world and promote the world's recognition and understanding of Chinese culture from the side. The classics in culture are among the most important carriers of cultural memory. Translation of classics involves the transmission of intense source cultural memory into target languages (Luo 2017). The practical translation of Pingguo Zhuang Liao songs involved intra-lingual and inter-lingual translation. The former exists in translation from Zhuang dialect and Latin Zhuang into Chinese, while the latter is translated from Chinese into English. This paper holds that the translation of Liao songs is a dynamic and complementary process that integrates intralingual translation and interlingual translation, which should be considered comprehensively from the linguistic, cultural, and interdisciplinary perspectives and adopt three translation strategies: foreignization, annotation, and paratext.

The translation is divided into three kinds: intralingual, interlingual, and inter-semiotic (Jakobson 1992). Intralingual translation, also called rewording, refers to using some language signs of the same language to explain other language signs. In more detail, intralingual translation meets the need for translation within the same language, which is indicative of the richness of perspectives, knowledge, and cultures that exist within linguistic traditions, maintaining meaning and the need to adjust to different audiences and expectations. Interlingual translation, or named translation proper, refers to interpreting language signs in one language by language signs in another language. That is to say: Interlingual translation is a dynamic comparison of two cultures that eventually emphasizes and complicates the sometimes irreconcilable differences between the two languages and the two cultures.

#### 3.1 Intralingual translation

To deliver the authentic meaning and spirit of Pingguo Zhuang Liao songs, some local singing masters have done the intralingual translation; they tried to translate the lyrics of Liao songs from Zhuang dialect into Chinese mandarin. Among them are Huang Yaoguang, Huang Bensheng, Huang Zhengrong, Lu Jingkang, Nong Xuefei; during the 60s of last century, they collected the song books which were written in vernacular words from the local folk and translated them sentence by sentence into Latin Zhuang first, and then into Chinese mandarin. It is a process of rewording; the translation can only be a literal translation and relatively rough. After months of proofreading and revising, *Liao Songs (Zhuang Folk Long Lyrical Songs)* was compiled and mimeographed in 1962. Hereupon, Xinhua New Agency Guangxi Branch reported on this event in *People's Daily*, which caused a stir in folk literature and art circles. Since then, Zhuang Liao songs have gained renown nationwide. During the Cultural Revolution, all work on Liao Songs had been suspended and came to nothing. It was not until 1986 that Guangxi Ethnic Minority Ancient Books Arrangement and Publication Planning Office was set up to resume the collection, collation, translation, and publication of Liao songs, in 1993, *Tiandong Liao Songs, A Collection of Ancient Books of Zhuang Folk Songs* written in ancient Zhuang, Pinyin Zhuang, and Chinese, was published by Guangxi Nationalities Publishing House. Since then, many people from different fields have been working to col-

lect and translate Zhuang Liao songs; among them are He Chengwen, Qin Naichang, Luo Hantian, Liang Tingwang, and Nong Mingjian, Huang Guoguan, Li Xiulang, etc. They selected the song books and translated Liao songs into Zhuang and Chinese, respectively; the intralingual translation connects the two phases and makes interlingual translation possible in making source texts and translated texts accordant to each other.

In the translation of Liao songs, intralingual translation occurs within the same language. Singing masters, researchers, and experts of Zhuang studies translated the lyrics of Liao songs recorded in ancient Zhuang characters into Chinese. Adherence to the principle of authenticity emphasized in international intangible cultural heritage protection, this study emphasizes restoring the authenticity of Zhuang Liao songs as much as possible in translation. Zhuang Liao songs are passed down from generation to generation through oral singing from intralingual translation. Due to the differences in Zhuang dialects and Zhuang characters, many lyrics of Liao songs are often misread or misunderstood by the singers. To sort out the concise and authentic inheritance song books, it is essential to collect, collate and compare the songs from the local singers through Zhuang nationality “March the 3rd” song festival and various Liao songs contests and folk singing occasions. Recorded in the ancient Zhuang characters, the sound and meaning of Liao songs are well kept in its primitive model, which is valuable in maintaining authenticity. However, few researchers acquire the ancient Zhuang characters, nor do the young singers when the Liao songs are sung and performed on various occasions. Some Liao songbooks have been published without enough caution. This study emphasizes using ancient Zhuang characters to record Liao songs to activate the ancient Zhuang characters studied in the academic circle and the local people.

In order to keep the perfect artistic style of Liao Songs, significant efforts have been made in Zhuang transliteration and Chinese translation. First of all, this is attributed to the understanding and attention towards the excellent ethnic culture from the leaders of the Pingguo Party Committee, People’s Congress, and People’s Government. While developing the local economy, the Pingguo administration has attached great importance to the protection of ethnic, cultural heritage and the building of ethnic, cultural brands, which shows that the leaders of Pingguo of all levels have comprehended the relevant theories and policies of the CPC Central Committee on national culture development. Nong Minjian, the Pingguo People’s Congress director, is in command at the forefront. He has considerable insight into the value of “Liao Songs” and is quite familiar with the relevant history, culture, and ethnic customs. He has always regarded the collection and arrangement of “Liao Songs” as his obligatory duty in his busy administrative work. He organises and manages the team for the transliteration and translation of “Liao Songs”. Pleasant working and living conditions are provided to Luo Hantian to concentrate all his mind in transliteration and translation. The translation is the connection and transformation of two different languages. Due to the sharp differences in word structure and expression habits between the two languages, significant obstacles usually have occurred in translation. The pleasure and hardship can only be tasted through personal experience. Without a doubt, Luo Hantian had cracked all kinds of obstacles before he was able to transliterate and translate Liao Songs with more than 24,000 lines.

Authenticity prioritizes selecting the typical material and keeping it faithful to the original Liao Songs in transliteration and intralingual translation. Literature reviews show that domestic translation and arrangement are usually not recognized by the international academic circle. Its arbitrary editing, adding, deleting, and changing the original meaning of the lyrics, etc., thus confusing the concepts of the creation and collection in the preservation of Liao Songs. It takes a long time for people to realize the significance of authenticity in keeping the folk



works.

Secondly, to transliterate and translate Liao Songs, the interpretation of the words is the essential work and the first barrier to breakthrough. Fortunately, Youjiang River Basin is the hometown of Luo Hantian, in which he was born and cultivated to be a trained researcher of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. Being familiar with the local dialects and the vernacular characters which are applied in recording folklore as well, knowing well the ethnic customs in this area, guided and instructed by many famous singers of Liao Songs, all these factors have provided him with a panoramic view on “Liao Songs” and its related background of history, culture, and customs. Therefore, his transliteration of words in the Zhuang language is more accurate, which creates a relatively solid foundation for Chinese translation.

Thirdly, his Chinese translation is accurate and fluent, faithful to the original, without arbitrary addition, subtraction, and misinterpretation; thus has achieved the criteria of “Faithfulness, Expressiveness, and Elegance” in the translation of poems. The words in the original text are not added, not interpreted at will, and the corresponding relations are handled properly so that the credibility of the translation is greatly improved. Take a piece of duet songs in Songs of March as an example, which the lyrics in Zhuang language go like this: “Ngoenzneix ndei yianz ndei/raen roegciz dop fwed/raen dungieg siu rumz/raen lwg vunz ok moq” (Luo 2009). The original translation is: “what a good day / see the magpie spread its wings / see the crocodile call the wind / see others bring forth the new”. When it comes to English translation, it goes like this: “What a good day today, magpies its wings to display, flood dragons whistling in water, out the newly weds to play”. The second and the third sentences correspond with each other exactly, although the first and the fourth sentences cannot correspond; due to the accurate understanding of the original text, the Chinese translation can better express the original meaning in the Zhuang language. The better translation also lies in maintaining the syllable structure of the original poem, which is composed of five words, and the translations of each line also keep in five words. Although it is tough to do so, it can better maintain the poetic nature of the original text so as not to scatter the poetic style and lose the poetic flavor because of the hardship in poem translation. Some lines are challenging to correspond, so adding notes after the translation can be regarded as a kind of innovation and can give readers a chance to ponder it for themselves. Take another piece of duet songs in Songs of March as an example, which the lyrics in the Zhuang language go like this:

“Ngeih sam nyied rumz hung, mbae fung loenq laj lueg, loenq laj lueg dox gyaux, mbauq daenj hau giet gyoengq” (Luo 2009). The literal translation of “mbauq daenj hau giet gyoengq” is “Handsome young men wear white cloth and come in groups”. Its transliteration is “Groups of handsome young people dressed in white”, which is hard to translate into five words in a line, so it is wise to translate the phrase “handsome young people” into “Mao”, with an annotation to explain the meaning of “mbauq” in Zhuang language and culture. Its English translation is “February and March it is windy, maple leaves are in the valley, various leaves all are mixed, crowds of boys are in white.” With such notes, it is very convenient for the reader to understand the meaning of the lyrics of Liao Songs, and it is also a corresponding measure for the translator to be faithful to the original text.

In a word, the transliteration and intralingual translation of the Liao songs of the Pingguo Zhuang nationality have brought us new ideas. However, it is more complex, and some places can still be improved; the problem of translation is minor and unimportant. There are hundreds and thousands of Zhuang folk poetry, yet few have



been translated into English and even fewer satisfactory translations. Pingguo Zhuang Liao songs can provide a new model for translating Zhuang folk songs, looking forward to more similar books published. It is for the preface of this book.

### ***3.2 Interlingual translation***

To promote excellent national culture to the world, it is vital to consider the acceptance and audiences' expectations of the target culture and carefully remove all kinds of obstacles in intercultural communication to achieve positive and practical effects. The interlingual translation is the second step in translating Liao songs. After the publication of "Pingguo Zhuang Liao Songs" in 2009, the People's Government of Pingguo County invited professors from the Foreign Language Department of Baise University to form a translation team for English translation. In 2011, the English version of Pingguo Zhuang Liao Songs was officially published by Guangxi Normal University Press. In 2012, this book's publication and distribution promotion conference was held in Nanning. The publication of this English edition has created the first English translation of Zhuang original folk songs, filled the gap in the English translation of traditional folk songs of the Zhuang nationality, built a bridge for the communication between the traditional culture of the Zhuang nationality and the world culture, and laid a solid foundation for further enhancing the international influence of Zhuang Liao songs.

On the other hand, interlingual translation is produced between two different languages, which people in the target culture generally understand; some translators consider this phase to be the accurate translation. The translation is the most recognizable type of rewriting, specifically in Liao songs translation, as "it can project the image of an author and /or a (series of) work(s) in another culture." (Lefevere 2010) To help the target readers for adaptation, English translation in the form of interpretation, rewriting, annotation is necessary for further explaining the meaning; for example, in the translation of March Songs, totally there are 172 English annotations attached at the end of the translation, such interpretation of translation strategies to achieve the target language readers to better understand the source text.

### ***3.3 English translation of Zhuang Liao Songs***

This paper proposes that the target readers' acceptability and the accuracy of translation are considered to be the ultimate purposes and overriding standards which should be attained in the English translation of Zhuang Liao songs, for the intelligibility of source text in the target culture, main attentions have been paid on the following two aspects which can not be neglected in the English translation of Zhuang Liao songs, namely, annotation, rhythm, and rhyme.

#### ***3.3.1 Annotation***

A work without annotations cannot be regarded as a normative academic work, especially in the humanities and social sciences. Annotation provides supplement necessary information with extra notes, a translation skill frequently employed in the English translation of Zhuang Liao songs. Annotations have been classified into content and source notes (Tong 2020). Content notes are responsible for explaining, revising, supplementing, and extending the relevant content in the text. While source notes indicate the sources of quotations, ideas, and ideas in the text and, in some cases, indicate that the content has been granted permission. In the author of this article's English translation of Zhuang Liao songs, most of the notes are content notes; for example, in *The Brigands'*



*Song*, there are 242 textual and ethnographic notes; in *Songs of March*, there are 172 textual and ethnographic notes, which help target readers to have a better understanding of the source culture, and present the English translator's understanding and comments on the Chinese version of the Liao songs. All the notes are marked with Arab numbers in the text, and all items of the notes are put at the end of the book as an index, rather than be inserted into the translation, to keep the consistent readability for target readers. In applying annotation in the English translation of Liao songs, attention should be paid to the following aspects: maintaining the text and notes, keeping readability during the reading process, ensuring necessity and relevance, to keep accuracy and comprehensiveness.

**Example 1:**

Daengz vunz mbanj<sup>①</sup> ok liu  
 大家都出游 (Luo 2009)  
 Out most of villagers to play.

Mbanj in Zhuang dialect, the original meaning is one half, and the original meaning of this sentence is more than half the people come out to play, which is transliterated as all people go out for sightseeing.

**Example 2:**

Sau<sup>②</sup> daenj fonx giet gyoengq  
 满山黑衣婧 (Luo 2009)  
 Crowds of girls are in black.

Sau in Zhuang dialect means young women in Zhuang dialect, here Pinyin is used in the transliteration as "Shao", together with the annotation, the original meaning is that women in black clothes flocked together", here translated as there are black women all over the mountain, which clearly express both its literary and implied meanings

**Example 3:**

Ranz ranz ciuz baenz dawh  
 家人齐齐<sup>③</sup> (Luo 2009)  
 Family members are all here.  
 Ciuz baenz dawh ndaw naeuz  
 齐似筒中筷  
 As chopsticks in the tube.

The original meaning of this sentence is that every family is just like many chopsticks in the box, which translates here as a whole family together. "Chopsticks in the bamboo tube" have definite cultural meanings, representing family members united together and being kind to each other. So both transliteration and annotations need to be used to express the implied meaning.

**Example 4:**

In the English translation of Zhuang Liao songs, some lines are challenging to correspond, so adding notes

after the translation can be regarded as a kind of innovation and can give readers a chance to ponder it for themselves. Take another piece of duet songs in Songs of March as an example, which the lyrics in the Zhuang language go like this: “Loeg nyied loeg, Aen loek beix senq doq, Beix senq doq aen loek, Gwn co loek siz saih” (Luo 2009). The literal translation of “Loeg nyied loeg” is “June the sixth in the lunar calendar”. The transliteration of this section is “Lunar the sixth June’s come; my waterwheel has already done, I have fixed the waterwheel, feeling at ease on that day”, because June the sixth is the Cattle Festival in Zhuang community, in which all the cattle do not work in the fields. Cattle are fed with black glutinous rice. The original meaning is that both man and cattle do not work today, so it is wise to translate the lyrics into “feeling at ease on that day”, with a note to explain the meaning of “Loeg nyied loeg” in Zhuang language and culture. Its English translation is “June the sixth”. With annotations, it would be helpful for the target readers to understand the meaning of the lyrics of Liao Songs, and it is also an effective way for the translators to deliver the original texts.

### 3.3.2 *Rhythm and rhyme*

Sound symbolism features the nation, which restricted the rhythm (Zhang Bin 1998); for example, English is a stress-timed rhythm while Chinese is a syllable-timed rhythm. Every language in the world is spoken with one kind of rhythm or another. Chinese, French, Spanish have such a rhythm and are called syllable-timed languages. In the kind known as a syllable-timed rhythm, the periodic recurrence of movement is supplied by the syllable-producing process: the chest pulses, and hence the syllables, recur at equal intervals of time – they are isochronous. In the other kind, known as a stress-timed rhythm, the periodic recurrence of movement is supplied by the stress-producing process: The stress-pulses, hence the stressed syllables, are isochronous. English, Russian, Arabic illustrate this other mode. They are stress-timed languages. For example, English emphasizes stress syllables; hence, the masculine rhyme in English phonetics often appears in the last stress syllable. On the contrary, the Chinese language is a tone language, and it has its own phonetic and phonological features; different tone indicates different sound symbolism. Ancient Chinese held that “Upper Even sounds sad and quiet; Lower Even sounds strict and lift; Rising Tone sounds direct and hurry; Falling Tone sounds clear and long” (Wang 1981).

The phonetic symbol means a written character used in phonetic transcription of a particular speech sound. Each language has its own unique “sound”. Languages differ in how the sounds are put together, how they influence each other, and especially the rhythm, stress, and pitch patterns. Linguists study speech sounds in two ways: phonetically and phonologically. Phonetics studies the inventory of sounds in the language in general and how they are produced and perceived (Meng 2002). Phonology is the study of how sounds are organized in a particular language, which sounds can be distinctive in a language, in what position they may occur. What types of automotive sound variants are possible (Meng 2002). Phonetics is one of the vital parts of poetic rhyme. People usually use phonetics to arouse the associations between the rhyme and some extraordinary things; such association is phonetic symbolism. In the English language, it is common sense that vowels divide into sonorous and thin, while consonants divide into hard and soft. In *A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry*, sound symbolism is distinguished in the following process (Leech 1980).

Soft

a) Nasal: /l/ /r/ /n/ /m/ / /

- b) Fricatives: /v/ /f/ /s/ /z/
- c) Palato-alveolar affricates: /ts / /dz /
- d) Plosives: /b/ /d/ /g/ /p/ /t/ /k/

In the practical translation of an original poem into the target language, the poem's rhythm is indispensable for the aesthetic effects of musicality and poeticity. As Wang Dongfeng mentioned in his "Translating Poetic Rhythm from English into Chinese":

The regular repetition of syllables sets up the formative mechanism of poetic rhythm in one way or another. As far as the English-to-Chinese translation of poetry is concerned, this kind of repetition can be reproduced functionally. Since English and Chinese have a remarkable similarity in the formative mechanism of rhythm, this metrical component of the original can be stimulated to a great extent by integrating the TL resources accordingly. (Wang 2020)

Vice versa, in the same vein, English translation of Zhuang Liao songs could be attained via the regular repetition of some syllables in the lyrics of Liao songs.

As a poetic device, rhyme means the correspondence of two or more words with similar-sounding final syllables placed to echo one another. Writers use rhyme to produce sounds appealing to the reader's senses and establish a poem's stanzaic form. End rhyme (indicates the rhyme used at the end of a line to echo the end of another line) is most common, but internal, interior, or leonine rhyme is frequently used as an occasional embellishment in a poem – e. g., William Shakespeare's "Hark; hark! the lark at heaven's gate sings", or as part of the regular rhyme scheme.

There are several methods in sound symbolism of English rhyme. Here alliteration, assonance, and end rhyme are mainly discussed. English rhymes in poems focus on letters, pronunciation, and syllables. Alliteration means repetition of the same sound at the beginning of two or more stressed syllables, repetition of the same letter or sound within nearby words. Most often, repeated initial consonants. Assonance means repeating similar vowel sounds, preceded and followed by different consonants, in the stressed syllables of adjacent words. End rhyme means a word with the same last sound as another word. Both poems and songs have applied end rhymes in their lyrics in most human languages, including Chinese and English. Moreover, rhymes at the end of a line in a song have different forms, which include "AABB", "AABCCB", "ABAB" and "ABCABC".

The rhymes in Zhuang Liao songs are different from English poetic rhymes; there are mainly five kinds of rhymes in Zhuang Liao songs, namely, foot-foot rhymes, foot-head rhymes, foot-waist rhymes, free verses, and iterative rhymes (Su 2017). In the rhymes of Zhuang Liao songs, "foot" means the last word of a line; "head" means the first word of a line; "waist" means the word in the middle of a line. "Foot-foot rhyme" indicates that the last word of a line rhymes the last word of the next line; in most cases, Zhuang Liao songs are foot-head rhymes, in which the last word of a line rhymes the first word of the next line; "Foot-waist rhyme" means that the last word of a line rhymes the middle word of the next line, it is the unique rhyme in Zhuang Liao songs; literally, free verses mean the free choices in the Liao songs rhymes; while "iterative rhyme" means the repetition of the words appearing in the previous lines. Specifically, "Foot-waist rhyme" and "iterative rhyme" are distinctive rhymes in Zhuang Liao songs, not found in English poetic rhymes. So when translating Liao songs

into English, the English rhyming principle is applied to make sense to the target readers.

**Example 1:**

Iterative Foot–waist Rhyme: (Luo 2009, 5)

Song hoiq daengz gyaenj giuz	(我倆到橋頭)
A	
Raen ga giuz senq raek	(見橋早已歪)
A      B	
Raen gij naek senq duenh	(見愛早已斷)
B      C	
Naek senq duenh sam seiq	(斷成四成三)
C	

**Example 2:**

Half iterative rhyme: (Luo 2009, 5)

Song hoiq bae caeg nduj	(我倆初上陣)
A	
Bae cam youx aeu sai	(去問妹要帶)
A      B	
Baih de miz rumz lai	(那帶風厲害)
B	
Cam aeu sai heux hwet	(問要帶系腰)
B	

Its rhythm is mainly based on rolling the interlinking foot–waist rhyme, with four and half–sentences inserted for iterative rhyme. The structure is as follows:

Interlinking Foot–Waist Rhyme:

We arrive at the bridge	
A	
Seeing the bridge already broken.	
A      B	
Love has broken for long	
B      C	
Into pieces we don't want.	
C	

Semi Iterative Rhyme:

The first time we meet	
C	
Sister gives me my girdle	
A      B	
Overthere strong winds blow	
B	
Ask for girdle to tie waist	
B	

After being processed by folk artists for many generations, Liao Songs have widely applied artistic techniques such as repetition, metonymy, simile, metaphor, parallelism, metonymy, etc., with beautiful and refined lyrics and strong artistic appeal. Among them, repetition is the most popular way which has been frequently used in Liao Songs; taking one poem from “Songs of March” as an example, these two rhythms turn back gracefully, with a strong sense of music, thanks to the turning of mountains and rivers in Lingnan.

**Male:**

By bridge pretty flowers bloom,  
 On river fresh lowers float.  
 Available to watch with a boat,  
 Or we regret back home

**Female:**

By bridge pretty flowers bloom,  
 On river fresh lowers float.  
 No a boat to watch,  
 Down the beach flowers flow.

The four lyrics sung by the male start to use flowers as metaphors for his lover; to watch flowers without a boat means that he cannot get the love of his lovers. The first two sentences of the female sung repeat the first two sentences of the male singer, which is the general framework frequently seen in Zhuang Liao Songs; at least one sentence is repeated in the female's lyrics. This kind of repetition has many advantages. Firstly, when the Zhuang people sing in antiphonal style, a female singer is required to answer her counterpart's singing once he pauses immediately. Usually, it is too late for her to compose four sentences. Generally, after listening to the first two sentences, the female has drawn up the last two sentences to respond antiphonally and swiftly, or she will be ridiculed incompetent. Secondly, Liao Songs are sung for the audience; repetition can make the audience hear the lyrics clearly and easily understand. Thirdly, it can follow the counterpart's meaning to accurately make the musical dialogue go smoothly and focus on the theme to broaden the artistic appeal. In the answer as mentioned above song, the female cleverly changed the last two sentences of the male singer; that is, she answered the male very well: If you could not figure out a solution to the problem, you will end up watching the flowers drift away with water, actually in this way she intends to encourage the man to pursue her boldly. In Liao Songs, we often see ten questions and ten answers, 24 seasonal questions, and answers crossing ten bridges, and so on, which make the lines lively and exciting. From an artistic point of view, Liao Songs are relatively perfect in the long folk poems of the Zhuang nationality.

#### 4. Conclusion

The translation is a cognitive activity that the translator transfers one language into another. With the excellent Chinese ethnic culture "Going out" policy, the translation and introduction of Guangxi ethnic minority classic literature and culture are critical in promoting the Zhuang language and culture to the outside world. Ethnic minority cultures in Guangxi constitute an indispensable part of Chinese ethnic culture. As a bridge and link of communication between nations, the English translation of Zhuang Liao songs plays an indispensable role in the process. The cultural products of Guangxi ethnic minorities can carry forward the national spirit, increase the ethnic identity, and spread national culture to the target readers. For the classic literature and culture of the ethnic minorities in Guangxi, gaining acceptability in the target culture is vital in the era of increasingly frequent intercultural communication. Thus accurate English translation gives full play to the vitality and influence of the cultural exchange in the global dissemination of Zhuang Liao songs as the excellent culture of the ethnic minorities

of Guangxi.

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