

DOCTORAL THESIS

Translating Western musicals into Chinese: texts, networks, consumers

Sorby, Stella Lanxing

Date of Award:
2014

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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.

Acknowledgements

I consider myself a very lucky person, as I have had the privilege to meet and to work with people who are not only intellectually inspiring, but also generous in their help and support during my journey of study.

I owe my deepest gratitude to my supervisor Dr Robert Neather. It was he who has made it possible for me to complete this innovative and challenging project. His open mindedness for new ideas, his attention to detail, his generous help and support, his patience and encouragement, his kindness and consideration, make it a great pleasure and enjoyment to work with him, just like a good friend.

I would like to thank my co-supervisor Dr Ester Leung for her help and encouragement for my study. I often felt uplifted by her appreciation of the strength of my project, as it was often she who reminded me to be positive when I felt low.

I would also like to thank the late Professor Martha Cheung, Professor Tan Zaixi, Professor Jane Lai, Dr Jessica Yeung, Dr Yau Wai Ping, Dr Wayne Liang and Ms Carina Lok at the translation program of the Hong Kong Baptist University for their help and input to my research. Also, my special thanks go to the Hong Kong Research Grants Committee for their generous fellowship, which has enabled me to embark on my research here.

I am eternally grateful to Dr Paul Rastall, my mentor and my previous supervisor, for his inspiration and guidance, for his trust and confidence in me, for his never failing and invaluable help and support throughout my completion of this study. My gratitude goes as well to Dr Carol O'Sullivan, also my previous supervisor, for all her kind help and encouragement.

I value the inspirational discussions on various occasions with Professor Theo Hermans, Professor Kirsten Malmkjaer, Professor Stuart Christie, Professor Douglas Robinson, Professor Mona Baker, Professor Edwin Gentzler, Professor Rupert Chan, Professor Sherry Simon, and Professor John Milton, which have proved to be very useful for my preparation of this thesis.

This study greatly benefited from the industry insiders I have interviewed, and their generous time and effort in sharing their views and experiences with me, such as Nick Yu, Xue Fan, Joel Bishoff, Phil Qiu, Georg Malvius, Richard Fei, Hu Xiaoqing, Li Suyou, Jiang Qinghua, to name just a few.

I have enjoyed my study experience at the Hong Kong Baptist University and the various friends and their company, including Fan Yiting, Blake, Henry, Christine and Marija.

Finally, I must thank my family, my grandmother, my parents, my husband and my brother, for taking all the worries off me and providing me with every help they can. This dissertation would not have been possible without their love and care.

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