
Original Research Article

On the copyright exportation of Chinese network fictions

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Abstract: Chinese network fiction, a new literary genre in the new era, has seen significant development in copyright export since 2004. This paper examines its current status, problems, and solutions. The export scale has expanded to over 40 countries along the “Belt and Road” by 2019, with a potential market value of 30 billion yuan and 850 million potential readers. However, challenges exist. Translation issues such as slow speed, talent shortages, and difficulty translating specific terms hinder progress. Export channels are mainly reliant on translation websites and domestic companies, limiting the exploitation of ancillary copyrights. Piracy is also a major obstacle due to weak international copyright protection. To address these, solutions include training translation talents, diversifying export types by targeting different audiences and cooperating with various industries, and enhancing copyright awareness and communication among companies.

Keywords: Chinese network fictions; Copyright exportation; Translation problems; Export channels; Copyright protection

Foreword: In the digital age, Chinese network fictions have emerged as a distinctive cultural product, demonstrating remarkable vitality and influence. With the globalization of cultural exchanges, their copyright exportation has become a significant phenomenon worthy of in-depth exploration. This study delves into the multifaceted aspects of Chinese network fictions’ copyright exportation, aiming to comprehensively analyze its current situation, identify the existing problems, and propose practical solutions. By doing so, it endeavors to contribute to the healthy development of Chinese network fictions in the international cultural market and facilitate more effective cross-cultural literary communication.

Chinese network fiction is the new genre of literature which has shown the new look of China fully in the new era. The application and blend of online fictions in cross border fields such as film and television and games have been deeply integrated into one.

Relatively, it’s it has not been long for the history of copyright exportation of Chinese network fictions. It first started in 2004 and mainly exported to Thailand, Vietnam and other southeastern Asian countries at that time. In 2015, the copyright exportation of Chinese network fictions got a sustained development with the promotion of Chinese network fiction companies, such as the China Literature, Funstory.ai, and ChineseAll. In recent years, large quantities of Chinese network fictions have been exported into many other countries overseas.

1. The Current Situation of Chinese network fictions’ copyright exportations

In recent years, we have achieved great success in copyright exportation of Chinese network fictions. The localized export channels and expanded Export Scale have brought huge Profit Margins.

1.1. Expanded export scale

In terms of export regions, according to the data of the Research Report of Internet Literature Copyright Protection which was provided by iResearch, in 2019, Chinese online literature has been spread to more than 40 countries along the “One Belt and One Road” route, which have been translated into more than a dozen

languages including English, French, Japanese, Korean and Russian.

1.2. Huge profit margins

The copyright exportation of Chinese network fictions has huge potential market value that can reach 30 billion Yuan.

In terms of the amount of readers, the Chinese network fiction has reached 700w and has 850 million potential readers. The consumer demand will inevitably lead to the introduction of the copyright of Chinese network fiction overseas.

Due to the charm of oriental magic and a large amount of audiences, we can foresee the huge profit margins of the exportation of Chinese network fictions.

1.3. Localized export channels

With the adaptation in the last few decades, the exportation channels of the copyright of Chinese network fiction have reformed its localized export channels.

The Cultural difference of cultural is a major factor to influence exportation. There are less cultural differences between China and to the Southeast Asia, Japan and South Korea than the between Europe and America with China. Therefore, the copyright exportation more focuses more on exploiting the right of film and television drama adaptation and other ancillary copyright.

Taking the habits of readers in different countries of Europe and America into consideration. The classification of Chinese network fictions will also be specialized according to the user tendency of each website when the domestic companies contact with them. There will be more focused on individual reading needs in Rulate and groups, gender and age in Wuxiaworld when they recommend the works to their users.

2. The problems in copyright exportation of Chinese network fictions

The three main factors that affect the exportation mostly are about the translation, export channels and copyright protection

2.1. The problem of translation

The first barrier is the problem of translation which seriously affect the speed and impact of the exportation. The slow speed has always been a thorn for the export. According to the 2018 development report of Chinese network fictions, the number of domestic network fictions has reached 24.42 million. However, there are only about 500 fictions that have been fully translated into others language which including some fictions that have not been authorized.

Analyzing the cause of slow translation speed we must focus on the length of the text and writing time of Chinese network fictions which are relatively long than other fictions types. To focus on the translation, we can find the shortage of translation talents and the high translation costs are also the problems that we should know.

The difficulty of translation is also a problem which perplex the translators. For example, there are many special Chinese words in network fictions, such as “Di”, “Dantian” and other words that the foreigner cannot understand and translators do not know how to translate.

2.2. The dilemma of export channels

At present, the copyright exportation still mainly relies on the promotion of translation websites and the domestic network fictions companies. The single channel that limits the exportation is the dilemma that we can't escape.

The exportation of Chinese network fictions gradually opened up the online literature market in southeastern Asia, Europe and America with the establishment of Wuxiaworld and other translation websites. These types of copyright export are mainly focused on the translation copyright and the influences of fictions are mainly limited to the audience of translation websites.

The single export channel affects the types of copyright exportation which focus on publishing right. As for the ancillary copyrights, which have more profit margins, they don't play their part at all. There are only about 500 publishing houses that have the experience of exploiting ancillary copyrights. (Yang 25)

2.3. The difficulty of copyright protection

The combination of technological progress in both digitization and computer networking has been a challenge for traditional ways of managing intellectual property.(Varian 121-138) How to do a good job in copyright protection of network fictions is an issue that we cannot be ignored.

As we all know, the piracy has long been a headache for Chinese network fictions. According to the 2018 copyright protection report of Chinese network fictions, piracy has caused a loss of 583,000yuan for network fiction at home. While due to the weak communication between Chinese and foreign countries fictions companies and the difficulty of transnational copyright protection, it's also very serious to the problem of piracy in foreign countries.

We can see that piracy has become a major obstacle for the copyright exportation. With the deepening of copyright exportation, it is imperative to change the weak status of copyright protection and strengthen it.

3. The suggested solutions to copyright exportation of Chinese network fictions

3.1. Training translation talents and standardizing translation mode

Efficiency and quality when translating network fictions are something that matters. Training the talents and standardizing translation mode maybe the most effective method to solve the problems of high cost and inefficiency.

To solve the problem of high cost of translation, the most direct solution is to train translation talents. First of all, we should clarify the concept of translation. The copyright exportation of Chinese network fictions plays an important role in the communication of Chinese culture and ideas. While, if we only seek the speed of translation and neglect the quality, there will be some negative effects. The next step is to train the professional skills of translation talents. The translators need to have "bi-linguistic" competence, rational cultural consciousness and "bi-cultural" ability. (Liu and He120-123.) There are many translators but most of them don't have enough understanding of the differences between the styles and cultures of the Chinese and foreign network fictions. Major domestic network fictions websites can try to cultivate young and non-official translators from other industries. Because compared with the official cultural translators, the folk translator has incomparable advantages. (Liu 94-97.) Their unofficial contact with Chinese and western cultures and language ability is more suitable to the translation of network fictions.

As a new field of translation, its difficulty lies not only in the cultural differences, but also in the lack of the

“translation mode” that traditional literature has. Especially, there are many mysterious professional terms in the network fictions, such as “Qi”, “Dantian”, “Lianqi”, “Yuanying”. To solve this problem, Qidian puts forward a translation mode as early as 2017, which standardized the translation of some common nouns in network novels and implemented the unified principle. However, it’s necessary to broaden the scope and improve the level of implementation

As a new artificial intelligence technology company, Funstory.ai developed the world’s AI translation system of network fictions in 2018 for the first time, which improves the efficiency of translation by 3600 times and reduces the cost by 1% . This system makes a perfect combination between cultivating translation talents and standardizing interpretive scheme so as to make sure the successful and correct convey of the network novel. Besides, the supervision and improvement for human translators in the process of translation are needed.

3.2. Striving to own broad-based audience and diversifying the types of copyright exportation

The paths of copyright exportation of Chinese network fictions are mainly limited to the cooperation between translation websites and network fiction companies. The audiences of Chinese network fictions are limited to the users of websites, and the types of copyright exportation are also limited to the translation copyright.

To increase the audience, the first step that we should take is to analyze the audience in the market audience. The masses can generally be divided into three groups: low acceptance, normal acceptance and high acceptance to accept Chinese network novels. Publishing institutions should precisely locate the topics and select specific bibliographies to grasp the needs and preferences of overseas readers. (Sun 33) Firstly, the domestic fiction companies should do some propaganda work to those who have high acceptance to Chinese network fictions, such as students learning Chinese and those having indulged in network fictions for a long time. Then we can gradually expand to those with normal acceptance and high acceptance. Secondly, the companies should use different propaganda way to different people. For students who study Chinese, we can select excellent network fictions to export edition with bilingual mode versions. For those who have been addicted to network fictions for a long time, we can adopt online advertising to get their attentions. Thirdly, we should focus on the commonness of culture and the universal content which can be understood by both Chinese and foreigners. This commonness is the prerequisite for fictions to become world fictions. Only By this way will the exported fictions be easier for foreigners to accept. (Zhang 29) The potential readers of Chinese network fictions have reached 850 million in 2019. Therefore, it is more necessary to classify and target the right crowd if we want to turn the potential readers into real readers.

By diversifying the types of copyright exportation, we can see we have achieved remarkable success in the Southeast Asia, Japan and South Korea. The first place to export network fictions is Southeast Asia, which is also the main area to export the copyright of urban romance-themed works. (Hao87-9) And in Japan and South Korea, the exportation is also successful. For example, *Treading On Thin Ice*, which was broadcast in 2011 is adapted from the network fiction *Treading On Thin Ice*. The success of this teleplay directly promotes the exportation of the adaptation right of fictions. Then the South Korea released a remake of *Treading On Thin Ice*, which is called *Treading On Thin Ice-Li* in 2016. However, in Europe and the United States, export process faces more serious hampers caused by divergence of culture and language than in Southeastern Asia, Japan and South Korea. For example, “Empresses in The Palace” cannot make a big success in the United States due to editing, translation and other issues. From the comparison, we can find that if we want to diversify the types of copyright

exportation, we should consider using the achievement of domestic copyright exploitation. At the same time, the domestic companies can expand the types of co-operation between different companies and try to cooperate with film and game companies, not just limited to translation websites.

3.3. Enhancing the copyright consciousness and facilitating the copyright communication

Firstly, the copyright consciousness of domestic network fictions should be strengthened. Then, a good master of the laws of copyright protection in other countries is necessary. The current global copyright issue is mainly based on the Bernier convention signed by 178 countries, which stipulates that works are protected whether they are published or not. For a long time in the United States, copyright marking has been a prerequisite for acquiring copyright. It's not mandatory now in the United States, but whether to mark the copyright still has a great impact for safeguarding legal rights. Only by deepening the comprehension of copyright laws can the network fiction companies take the initiative in copyright protection. As a way of resolving disputes, the legal system, with all its imperfections, has something in its favor after all! (WILLIAMS 113-119) Therefore, the domestic network fictions companies should have deep understanding of them.

Secondly, it is necessary to facilitate the communication about the copyright between companies. Especially in communication between domestic and foreign network fictions companies, understanding for each other is essential. In the process of the copyright exportation, the domestic fiction companies should strengthen the communication of copyright with foreign companies and fully discuss the details of the cooperation, leading to the more long-term cooperation between the two sides and the more successful exportation.

Copyright protection is not a simple process of finding a pirate and destroying it at all. To do the job of copyright protection, we should do more. In order to control the impact of copyright infringement on the copyright exportation, domestic network fiction companies are required to strengthen their consciousness of copyright, pay attention to the copyright protection situation of different countries, and fully carry out the communication on copyright with foreign companies, so as to take the initiative in copyright protection.

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