

Reconstructing Chan Master for Contemporary English Readers: A Digital Humanities Approach to the Comic Translation of *Chan Shuo*

Minying Ye

Xi Chen

Macau University of Science and Technology

Macau SAR

Abstract

The English translation of the Chinese classic comic *Chan Shuo* 禪說 has garnered significant attention as a vital medium for introducing Chinese Chan Buddhism to English readers. This study investigates the representational meaning that emerges through the comic translation of *Chan Shuo*. In a digital humanities (DH) approach, the study first creates a self-built database of bilingual texts and images of Chan Master and then utilizes two tools developed at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, UAM CorpusTool and ImageTool, to annotate the database systematically, culminating in an analysis of the multimodal representational realizations of Chan Master. Based on the analytical framework combining visual grammar and visual narrative, it scrutinizes the participants, processes, and circumstances through both quantitative and qualitative methods. Moreover, it seeks to explore the multimodal translation methods to adapt Chan story for contemporary readers by examining the representation of Chan Master's image through the text-image interplay. The findings indicate that such a multimodal translation adeptly conveys the inclusiveness and dynamism of the Chan Master, effectively transmitting core concepts of Chan Buddhism to the English-speaking world.

Keywords

Chan Master, *Chan Shuo*, representational meaning, multimodal translation, digital humanities

摘要

中國經典漫畫《禪說》的英譯本作為向英語世界傳播中國禪宗文化的重要媒介，引起了廣泛關注。本研究旨在探討此漫畫翻譯過程中的多模態再現意義。基於數碼人文方法，研究首先自建雙語圖文資料庫，整合禪宗漫畫的文本與影像資源，隨後運用馬德里自治大學研發的UAM CorpusTool與ImageTool工具進行系統性標註，最終系統分析禪師形象的多模態再現過程。通過融合視覺語法與視覺敘事的理論框架，採用定量與定性相結合的研究方法，深入檢視翻譯主體、過程及語境要素。同時，通過解析圖文互動中的禪師形象再現機制，探索面向當代讀者的禪宗故事多模態翻譯策略。研究結果表明，這種多模態翻譯策略不僅生動呈現了禪師的包容性與動態特徵，更有效地向英語世界傳遞了禪宗文化的核心概念。

關鍵詞

禪師、《禪說》、再現意義、多模態翻譯、數碼人文

1. Introduction

Chinese Chan Buddhism has undergone a significant historical journey, expanding from its roots in China to countries such as Japan, Korea, and the United States over the centuries (Ban 2014; Zhang and Zhang 2012). The traditional Chinese philosophy of Chan Buddhism is an innovative achievement grounded in Chinese thought and culture, absorbing and adapting Indian Buddhist ideas, which has played a significant role and exerted considerable influence in the history of East Asian philosophy and culture (Fang 1995). The core concepts of Chan Buddhism are characterized as “*Buli wenzi, jiaowai biechuan, zhizhi renxin, jianxing chengfo* 不立文字，教外別傳，直指人心，見性成佛” (not reliant on the written word, a special transmission separate from the scriptures, direct pointing at your