How Translation Survives? Adaptation and Selection in the Spanish Version of *The Peony Pavilion*

Ruichen Zhou* and Changyu Guo**

With reference to Darwin's theory of adaptation and eco-holism, Eco-Translatology conceptualizes translation as the translator's selective activity that adapts to the translational eco-environment, thereby introducing an ecological paradigm to Translation Studies. This study presents a case of such adaptation through an analysis of the Spanish translation of The Peony Pavilion, a crowning achievement of kunqu. Based on the principles of multidimensional transformation, we examined the translator's adaptation across linguistic, cultural, and communicative dimensions to explore how the translation survives in a target-language context significantly removed from the source language context, while also acknowledging its constraints. Based on the analysis, we discussed how Eco-Translatology can inform Chinese-Spanish literary translation, with particular attention to key considerations in rendering Chinese drama, and how translational dispositions contribute to the achievement of some degree of holistic adaptation and selection, thereby cultivating its acceptance among the target audience.

Keywords: Eco-Translatology, *The Peony Pavilion*, literary translation, adaptation and selection, Chinese-Spanish translation

* Autonomous University of Madrid
** Shandong University

1. Introduction

Tang Xianzu's romantic tragicomedy, *The Peony Pavilion: Mudan Ting*, represents a crowning achievement of *kunqu*, a genre recognized as "the ancestor of Chinese operas" and designated a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO in 2001. The play achieved immediate acclaim upon its creation debut. As the eminent Qing dynasty scholar Lin Yining (1694, quoted in Zeitlin 1994: 128) observes, "when the published edition of the play first came out, there was no man of letters without a copy on his desk." Since its first partial translation into German in 1929, *The Peony Pavilion* has seen over twenty-three translations, captivating readers from across the world (Zhou 2022: 110).

The Peony Pavilion has experienced relatively delayed introduction to the Spanish-speaking world. Although sporadic and occasional translations of Chinese classics into Spanish began as early as the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries (Tian 2025), it was not until the late twentieth and early twenty-first century that complete and systematic translations began to increase. As Hou and Zhang (2015) point out, these translations remain insufficient in both quality and number, leaving Spanish readers "not ready yet to accept Chinese classical novels." This unfamiliarity with Chinese culture among the target audience poses a significant hurdle in creating a widely accepted translation. The principal difficulty is also found in the text itself. Levy (1982: 314) states that dramatic works offer "the most varied and formidable challenge to the translator among popular literary sub-genres." Bassnett-McGuire (1998; 2014) compares the translation of theatre texts to a labyrinth, highlighting the multitude of dimensions involved and the abundance of non-linguistic elements. *The Peony Pavilion* poses a formidable challenge for translators. Its complexity arises not only from its rich tapestry of literary forms, including poetry, prose, lyrics, music, essays, and narrative elements (Kong 2016), but also from the need for considerations that extend beyond linguistic recodification (Chang and Zhang 2020). In the age of Artificial Intelligence, the translator's role becomes even more pronounced in the transcultural

mediation and decision-making: a successful translation necessitates a deep understanding of theatrical conventions and cultural nuances to ensure its "survival" (Hu 2003) within target-language (TL) context.

Accordingly, Eco-Translatology, a paradigm stressing the wholeness and relevance, dynamics and balance (Hu and Tao 2016; Hu and Li 2024), provides "multidimensional transformation" as a holistic analytical method to better understand the complexity of translating such a work in a TL context significantly removed from the source-language (SL) context.

The sole Spanish translation of *The Peony Pavilion* by Alicia Relinque Eleta, a Spanish sinologist and professor at the University of Granada, was published in 2016, marking the 400th anniversary of the playwright's departure. The translation was met with widespread acclaim upon its release. The noted Spanish poet García Garzón (2017) states that the translation "has culminated brilliantly." The Chinese scholar Liu (2019: 341) also praises the adaptation, claiming that it "demonstrates the translator's respect to the original text and helps to disseminate Chinese culture" and the translator's subjectivity "can be noted everywhere."

Guided by the translational methods within Eco-Translatology, this analysis centers on the translator's role in the adaptive and selective processes of translation. It examines the multi-dimensional transformations in the Spanish version to understand how it is adapted for survival in the TL context.

2. Delineating Eco-Translatology

The theory of "translation as adaptation and selection" was initially introduced in 2001 (Hu 2001; 2003). Over the past twenty-five years, it has continuously drawn nutrients from both Western scholarship and Chinese philosophy, contributing to the establishment and advancement of Eco-Translatology (Hu 2020a). To date, Eco-Translatology has established itself as an important, independent, and innovative school within Chinese scholarship, gaining significant attention both from China and internationally, and representing an effort by Chinese

scholars to bridge the gap between Eastern and Western translation scholarship (Valdeón 2020: 651; Fu 2023: 6).

2.1. An ecological approach to Translation Studies

Drawing upon Darwin's theory of adaptation and eco-holism, Eco-Translatology steers Translation Studies towards an ecological approach, focusing on the translator's survival, textual life, and the translational eco-environment (Hu 2020a; Hu 2021: 7).

From this perspective, the translator is viewed as sole "organic being" and the center of the translation process. Since the inception of discussions on translation, Theorists from diverse schools have engaged in debates surrounding the image, function, and role of the translator, and have increasingly highlighted the role of the translator (Vermeer 1989; Venuti 1992; Hatim and Mason 1997). However, previous arguments have largely affirmed the translator's subjectivity without providing a systematic analysis of how the translator predominates the translation activity (Hu 2004). In contrast, Eco-Translatology centers the entire translation process on the translator, who is the only organic being in the triangle ST-translator-TT. Therefore, every action of the translator, whether adaptation or rebellion, is considered the translator's autonomous decision.

Eco-Translatology views the translation as "text-transplanting," in which the translator seeks to ensure the lasting survival of the ST's "life" in the TL eco-environment (Hu 2020b; Hu and Li 2024: 7). To fulfill this aim, the translator engages in a series of selections and adaptations to the "translational eco-environment," which encompasses the worlds of the ST, the source and target languages, the linguistic and cultural aspects of translating, and the people involved (Hu 2003: 287). Translation, therefore, is selection and adaptation.

It is worth noting that, as AI—especially Large Language Models (LLMs)—has gained increasing prominence in the 2020s, Eco-Translatology has been reconstructed to incorporate AI into its theorization, viewing it as a "digital living organism" and a "quasi-actor of translation" and focusing on crucial issues such as

human-machine symbiosis and the balance between technological development and human ethics (Hu 2025; Hu and Wang 2025).

2.2. Multidimensional transformation and translational methods within Eco-Translatology

Multidimensional transformation is a core translation method within Eco-Translatology (Hu 2020a: 72). On occasions, it is also described as a "translation doctrine" (ibid: 158). Essentially, it serves as the guiding principle for the translators.

From its perspective, the TT is the outcome of the translator's decision-making and finalization of the text, which operates across multiple dimensions (Hu 2003: 284). The translator performs an adaptive transformation across multiple dimensions, seeking a product with a higher degree of holistic adaptation and selection, thus enhancing its prospects of survival in the TT's ecology.

Hu (2006) summarizes the focus of the multidimensional transformation as the "three-dimensional transformation," wherein translators adapt and select within linguistic, cultural, and communicative dimensions. The linguistic dimension comprises all facets of language use, including prose style and figures of speech. In the cultural dimension, translators focus on the effects that the TT may produce among readers from diverse cultural backgrounds, influenced by their history, ethnic groups, beliefs, and education, etc. In the communicative dimension, emphasis is placed on fulfilling the communicative purposes of the ST. Some scholars also explored additional dimensions such as the artistic and aesthetic (Shi 2017; Guo 2023). The more dimensions of the translational eco-environment the translator adapts to, and the more appropriate the adaptive choices made, the higher the degree of holistic adaptation and selection (Hu 2006: 50).

Ten translational methods have been proposed within Eco-Translatology, consisting of one general principle, two strategies, three methods, and four techniques (Hu 2021; Yang and Hu 2024). A detailed description is provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Description of the translational methods within Eco-Translatology (Hu 2021: 12-13; Yang and Hu 2024: 110)

Translation principle	
Text-balancing Scrutinization	Coordinating the relationships among the text, translator and translational eco-environment to achieve comprehensive balance both within and beyond the text.
Translation strategies	
Source-Contextualization	Prioritizing adaptation to the linguistic form, cultural connotations, and writing style of the SL context.
Target-Contextualization	Prioritizing adaptation to the linguistic form, cultural connotations, and writing style within the TL context.
Translation methods	
Naturalization	Preserving the natural elements of the SL ecology, focusing on their originality and naturalness.
Vitalization	Preserving the organic and biological elements of the SL ecology, using personification when necessary.
Multi-Transformation	Employing a multidimensional, multi-modal, and multi-perspective translation approach, focusing on translators' selective adaptation and adaptive selection within the text.
Translation techniques	
Imitationalization	Imitating a specific natural image or form via artistic rendering in the text, focusing on its explicit form or style.
Extending Substitution	Employing adaptive extension, substitution or transformation of specific elements from the SL ecology to the TL ecology, focusing on their intrinsic meaning.
Adaptive Reduction	Reducing elements to condense the text's vital essence, which manifests as a contraction of the TT volume.
Adaptive Addition	Adding elements to complement vital essence that would otherwise be lost, manifested as an expansion of the TT volume.

In the following analysis, we will explore how the Spanish translator of *The*

Peony Pavilion employed diverse translational methods to adapt across the linguistic, culture, and communicative domains.

3. Adaptation and selection in the Spanish version of *The Peony Pavilion*

3.1. A concise summary of *The Peony Pavilion*

Set during the Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), the play depicts a tale of passion between Du Liniang and Liu Mengmei. Liniang, daughter of a scholar and official, receives a thorough education in classic literature and is raised according to conventional social mores. However, one spring day, a deep sense of dissatisfaction arises, leading to a dream about a romantic meeting with a young scholar, Mengmei. This dream strikes a chord of deep longing, which gradually results in an illness that ultimately causes Du Liniang to pass away from lovesickness. Before death, a self-portrait is left behind. Afterward, Mengmei discovers the portrait and, through the power of love, miraculously brings Liniang back to life. The couple then faces various challenges, including opposition from the family and the chaos of war, before finally achieving a joyous reunion.

3.2. Multidimensional transformation in the Spanish translation

The translator touches upon ideas related to multidimensional transformation in the translator's preface, which includes a comprehensive introduction of the author, the historical background of the literary creation, and the narrative's purpose, in essence, an analysis of the ST's eco-environment. Two pages are allocated to a rationale for translating a work "mostly composed of songs and poems, in a language that pushes expression to the maximum and yet combines cultured and colloquial registers" (Tang 2016: 16). The translator highlights the linguistic

transformation, aiming to "endow rhythm and harmony to songs and poems" and "give it musicality," while also acknowledging the necessary compromises among various dimensions, observing that "sometimes some element necessarily affects the elegance of the compositions" (ibid: 16-17). The translation of the following verse, for instance, illustrates how the translator engages in a multidimensional transformation, navigating through multiple dimensions:

(1)
ST: 【皂罗袍】原來姹紫嫣紅開遍，似這般都付與斷井頹垣……<u>朝飛暮卷，雲霞翠軒，雨絲風片，煙波畫船</u>——錦屏人忒看的這韶光賤。
[(Zaoluopao) Once, all the blossoms bloomed in their vibrant splendor, with shades of purple and red, yet now, they are all left to ruined wells and collapsed walls... Morning clouds drift and evening mists gather, colorful pavilions adorned with clouds and rain, fragments of wind and drizzle, and painted boats on misty waters -yet the one behind the embroidered screen sees this fleeting beauty as all too cheap and fleeting-.]

TT: [Zaoluopao] Y es que / el púrpura rojizo, el escarlata brillante brotan por doquier / para ofrecer su belleza a muro derribado, a un pozo en ruinas··· <u>Vuelvan al alba, al ocaso se enroscan / nubes rosadas en el pabellón esmeralda; / pétalos al viento, lluvia de seda / y un arco engalanado en olas de niebla.</u> / Escena majestuosa hurtada a los ojos / de la muchacha del biombo tejido de oro. [(Zaoluopao) And it is that / the reddish purple, the bright scarlet sprout everywhere / to offer their beauty to a collapsed wall, to a ruined well... Return at dawn, at sunset they twine / pink clouds in the emerald pavilion; / petals in the wind, silken rain / and an arch festooned in waves of mist. / Majestic scene stolen from the eyes / of the girl with the screen woven in gold.]

Upon encountering the enchanting garden, Liniang, experiencing a dissonance between the scenic beauty and her own stifled discontent, draws parallels between the picturesque setting with *collapsed wall* and *ruined well*, lamenting the spring's fleeting nature as a metaphor for the ephemeral quality of youth. Through this contrast, the author aims to inspire liberation from the societal constraints of the time.

Additionally, *The Peony Pavilion* is characterized by its stringent adherence to the prosodic structure. Each verse is headed by a music aria indicated in square brackets, which serves as a template dictating the length, tones, and rhymes for musical performance. Table 1 presents an illustration of the composition of the second verse in the provided example, marking the two tones in traditional Chinese, *ping* and *ze* (level and oblique), with the symbols "一" and "V," respectively (see Table 2).

Table 2. Example of reproduction of musicality in the Spanish version

ST	TT
朝飛暮卷	Vuelvan al alba, al ocaso se enroscan
一 一 V 一	[rhyme on a-a]
雲霞翠軒	nubes rosadas en el pabellón esmeralda
一 一 V 一	[rhyme on a-a]
雨絲風片	pétalos al viento, lluvia de seda
一 一 一 V	[rhyme on o-a]
煙波畫船	y un arco engalanado en olas de niebla
一 一 V 一	[rhyme on o-a]

The translator applies the technique "Imitationalization" to adapt the ST's metrical patterns to those of the TL, employing *rimas gemela* (twin rhymes), a Spanish prosodic rule wherein assonant rhymes repeat in pairs. In the communicative dimension, the translator uses "Adaptive Addition." Rather than a literal translation, the scene's components are synthesized through the encompassing term *belleza* (beauty): "*Para ofrecer su belleza a muro derribado, a un pozo en ruinas*" (to offer its beauty to the collapsed wall, a ruined well). This addition sharpens the contrast, intensifying the poignant sorrow and fulfilling the communicative implication in the ST.

As a result, the Spanish translation, as a product of translator's adaptation and selection, undergoes multi-transformation across linguistic, communicative, and aesthetic dimensions, achieving a high degree of holistic adaptation and selection.

Although these three dimensions are interwoven and difficult to isolate, the following analysis will appraise each one individually to facilitate discussion and better elucidate the translator's strategic choices.

4. Adaptive transformation in the linguistic dimension

The linguistic aspect has been one of the most discussed focal points in early translation studies, ranging from the functional equivalence theory (Nida and Taber 1969) to Peter Newmark's metaphor likening translation to a "craft consisting in the attempt to replace a written message and/or statement in one language by the same message and/or statement in another language" (Newmark 1981: 7). Instead of drawing a sharp distinction between linguistic and cultural models, Eco-Translatology positions language as one of the dimensions through which the "text-life is transplanted". In other words, translators are expected to carefully attend to the linguistic characteristics of the ST in order to revive them in the TL. Two such characteristics are particularly prominent in *The Peony Pavilion*: the linguistic musicality created through rhythm and rhyme, and a rich diversity of registers, as indicated in the various languages employed by the characters.

4.1. Musicality

Traditional Chinese theater's origins can be traced to early forms of song and dance, as evidenced by extensive historical documentation describing shamans from the pre-Qin dynasty, who sang and danced to the accompaniment of music for ceremonial events (Liu 2020: 122). Considering that musicality represents a crucial element of this literary genre's aesthetic power, adapting its metrical structure presents a significant challenge for translators.

Cyril Birch (1995: 7), one of the English translators of *The Peony Pavilion*, states that when translators have to tackle a lengthy and semantically packed line of a *qu*, they will almost certainly have to consider departing from the attempt to

represent the metrical form of the original quite so slavishly. As previously discussed, the translator departs from Chinese prosodic rules to adapt the rhymes to the TL, thus recreating the musicality in the TT. A further example is provided in the following verse:

(2)
ST: 乍晴膏雨煙濃，太守春深勸農。農重農重，緩理征傜詞訟。
[After the rain clears, mist thickens in the air; the prefect, in the deep spring, encourages farming. Farming is of great importance, farming is of great importance, delaying issues about taxes and condemnations.]

TT: Tras la lluvia bienhechora llega una bruma densa, / y el prefecto se dispone a la inspección de sus tierras. / El trabajo del campo es penoso, / el trabajo del campo es valioso. / Aliviemos los impuestos, aliviemos las condenas.
[After the good rain comes a dense mist, / and the prefect prepares for the inspection of his lands / The work of the field is hard, / the work of the field is valuable / Let us ease the taxes, let us ease the condemnations.]

In the ST, the musicality is expressed through two dispositions: the repetition of the disyllabic word *nongzhong* (the farm work is heavy), and the consonant rhyme on /uŋ/ in the last two verses, *zhong* (heavy) and *song* (condemn). In the Spanish translation, however, this disyllabic word is not repeated. This difference derives from the contrasting stylistic conventions of the two languages. While the repetition in Chinese is a rhetorical device that intensifies the rhythm, in Spanish, excessive repetition is generally avoided, as it suggests a limited vocabulary or a lack of sophistication (Leal de Rodríguez and Guerra de Muzza 1981: 31). Therefore, the translator presents an individual interpretation of *zhong*, conveying its dual senses of being burdensome or important. By selecting *penoso* (burdensome) and *valioso* (valuable), the translator not only preserves both meanings but also establishes a consonant rhyme on /oso/.

4.2. Registers

Register reflects how language varies with the speaker—shaped by factors like social background, region, gender, and age—as well as how it shifts with use, since any individual commands a repertoire of varieties and selects among them at different moments (Halliday 1964). Based on a large-scale empirical study on the speech features of residents in New York, Labov (1966) also finds that the way individuals speak indicates their social status and age. This contrast is evident in the language utilized by Du Bao, a distinguished scholar and Liniang's father, and a young cowherd, as they describe the rural landscape during Du Bao's official visit to the countryside:

(3)
a. ST: 平原麥灑，翠波搖翦翦，綠濤如畫。如酥嫩雨，繞塍春色蓋苴。
    [The plains are sown with wheat, swaying gently in the green waves, resembling a picturesque scene. It is like a tender rain, surrounding the ridges with the lush spring hues of moss and grass.]

    TT: El trigo salpica por doquier los campos, / ondas esmeralda recortadas al viento, / hermosa pintura de verdes sembrados. / Una lluvia bienhechora, al albur primaveral, / se despliega en los bardales.
    [Wheat sprinkles everywhere in the fields, / emerald waves cut in the wind, / beautiful painting of green sown fields, / a beneficial rain, at the springtime's light, / unfurls in the thickets.]

b. ST: 春鞭打，笛兒吵，倒牛背斜陽閃暮鴉。
    [Spring whip cracks, flute softly plays. Cows topple on their backs as the setting sun glints off evening crows.]

    TT: Agito mi tralla, / soplo la flauta, / montado a lomos de mi buey / contemplo los cuervos del atardecer.
    [I shake my whip, / I blow the flute, / riding on the back of my ox / I contemplate the crows of the sunset.]

In the play, each character's stage debut is marked by a monologue that indicates their identity and background. Upon his first appearance, Du Bao presents himself as "then famous scholar of the Xishu, now prefect of Nan'an" (Tang 1982: 7). As a man of education and high standing, his language is refined, sophisticated, and at times enigmatic, likening the scenery to a "beautiful painting," and the wheat field to "emerald waves." The cowherd, conversely, employs simple language, referencing commonplace features of rural life. These lines, lacking complexity, are clear and memorable.

The translator renders Du Bao's speech with considerable faithfulness, retaining its metaphors and subtle expression, thereby imbuing the translated text with a literary quality. The translation of the cowherd's words, however, receives more intensive treatment. To begin with, the impersonal narrative is shifted to the first person, lessening the distance between reader and character. In addition, the application of twin rhymes with the vowel sounds /a/ and /e/ enhances the musicality.

At the linguistic level, these choices represent not a mere imitation of the SL, but a creative adaptation to the TL's patterns, thereby revealing the strategy of "Target-Contextualization." They not only convey the musical and linguistic artistry of Chinese drama to Spanish-speaking audiences but also indicate a keen awareness of the differences between the two languages in terms of musical devices, along with keen awareness of how TL readers will receive the work. This amounts to a successful integration into the TL's ecology.

5. Adaptive transformation in the cultural dimension

Different perspectives, beliefs, and values create cultural differences between the ST and TT's environments. As Nida (1993) notes, language functions within culture in such a pervasive way that neglecting a text's cultural background impairs adequate understanding. Therefore, the translation implies a process of comparing, colliding, and synthesizing different cultures. The translator must concentrate on

conveying and interpreting the connotations of both cultures, considering those differences in the nature and substance of both cultures to avoid misunderstandings (Hu 2008: 2-3). Such transformations are ubiquitous in translating *The Peony Pavilion*, a work steeped in the social realities of the Southern Song dynasty, a world far removed from the cultural milieu of the TL.

5.1. Culturemes

Fernando Poyatos (1976: 313) notes culture comprises communal shared habits and language underpins communication, introducing "culturemes" as the minimal cultural units transmitted through language. During translation, culturemes in the ST function as cultural indicators, comprehensible to the TL audience only through the translator's mediation. Accordingly, the translator needs not only a sharp awareness of these culturemes but also a thorough understanding of their implied cultural meanings and the cultural divide between the two languages. One such example can be found in the translation of 雜種 (bastard), a term employed by Li Quan, the general leading the Jurchen rebel army against the Song empire:

(4)
ST: 世擾羶風，家傳雜種……漢兒學得胡兒語，又替胡兒罵漢人。
[The world is disturbed by the stench of sheep, and bastards are passed down in families... Han people learn the language of the Hu, only to curse the Han on behalf of the Hu.]

TT: Extendemos por el mundo nuestro hedor a cordero, / pequeños bastardos procreamos⋯ Los hijos del pueblo aprenderán nuestra lengua, / y acabarán maldiciendo a sus ancestros con ella.
[We spread our mutton stink over the world, / little bastards we procreate⋯ The sons of the Han people will learn our language, / and end up cursing their ancestors with it.]

In modern Mandarin, *zazhong* constitutes a pejorative term denoting a contemptible individual. During the Southern Song dynasty, however, it functioned

as a derogatory label applied to *hu* (the northern minority ethnic groups). In the early twelfth century, two such groups, the Jurchens and the Liao, founded kingdoms in opposition to the Song empire, whose population was primarily *han* (the Han ethnicity), and initiated southward incursions to acquire arable land. The word *zazhong*, establishing a binary between *han* and *hu*, conveys the strained relations between the Song empire and the northern minorities.

As noted by Wong and Shen (1999: 92-93), due to the long-term dominance of a feudal and conservative culture, Chinese society at that time exhibited greater ethnocentricity compared to Western cultures. To address this cultural gap, the translator employs the technique of "Adaptive Addition," providing a detailed footnote on the historical Han-Hu relationship: "The terms 'mutton stink' and 'bastards' were often applied to barbarian groups… Han refers to the Han ethnic group. The Jin dynasty, which at the time of the play is a threat to the Chinese Empire, were not of Han origin, but of Jurchen origin, and spoke their own language, hence these verses" (Tang 2016: 146). This explanatory note is crucial, as the cultural connotations and pejorative force of the terms would otherwise be lost on the target audience. This method, which exemplifies what Appiah (2021) terms "thick translation," demonstrates the translator's extensive knowledge of the source culture and commitment to facilitating understanding for the TL audience.

5.2. Culturemes chain and wordplay

Occasionally, several culturemes constitute a chain, interconnected in the same cultural milieu, thus requiring even greater attention from the translator. In Scene 18, having become disenchanted with her infatuation for her idealized lover, Liniang consults the elderly scholar Chen Zuiliang. The following exchange between the maid Chunxiang and the scholar is of particular interest:

(5)
ST:
　[貼] 只因你講《毛詩》，這病便是「君子好求」上來的。

[末] 是那一位君子?

[貼] 知他是那一位君子。

[末] 這般說,《毛詩》病用《毛詩》去醫。那頭一卷就有女科聖惠方在哩。

[貼] 師父,可記的《毛詩》上方兒?

[末] 便依他處方。小姐害了「君子」的病,用的史君子。《毛詩》:「既見君子,雲胡不瘳?」這病有了君子抽一抽,就抽好了。

[(Female character) Just because you mentioned the *Book of Songs*, this illness must have been caused by "a *junzi*'s yearning."

(Male character) Which *junzi* is it?

(Female character) Who knows which *junzi* it is?

(Male character) In that case, if the illness comes from the *Book of Songs*, then it should be treated using the *Book of Songs*. In the very first chapter, there's a remedy for women's ailments!

(Female character) Master, do you remember the prescription from the *Book of Songs*?

(Male character) Just follow its prescription. The young lady has been afflicted with the illness of *junzi*, so we use *shi junzi* to treat her. The *Book of Songs* says: "Having seen the *junzi*, how could one not recover?" This illness just needs a *junzi* to smoke, and she will be cured.]

TT:

Chunxiang: Fue lo que nos enseñó sobre el Clásico de las Odas; la enfermedad viene justo de «buscar con afán un noble señor».

Chen Zuiliang: ¿De qué noble señor hablas?

Chunxiang: ¿Quién sabe qué noble señor es ese?

Chen Zuiliang: Siendo así, de igual modo que ha enfermado por culpa de las Odas, te sanaremos también con ellas. En su primera parte, aparece una receta mágica para los males femeninos.

Chunxiang: Maestro, ¿ha podido memorizar todas las recetas de las Odas?

Chen Zuiliang: Actuaremos según ellas. La señorita ha contraído una enfermedad por culpa de un noble señor, usaremos al noble señor Shi. Dicen las Odas: «Viendo aquí a mi noble señor, ¿cómo no recobrar la salud?». Entra el noble caballero y cuando entra se recupera.

[Chunxiang: It was what you taught us about the *Book of Songs*; the disease comes just from "eagerly seeking a noble man."

Chen Zuiliang: What noble man are you talking about?

Chunxiang: Who knows what noble man that is?

Chen Zuiliang: Thus, just as she has become ill because of the *Book of Songs*, we will also heal her with it. In its first part, there is a magic recipe for female ailments.

Chunxiang: Have you been able to memorize all the recipes in the *Book of Songs*?

Chen Zuiliang: We will act according to it. The lady has contracted an illness because of a noble man, we will use the noble man *Shi*. The *Book of Songs* says, "Seeing my noble lord here, how can I not recover my health?" Let the noble man in, and when he enters, she will recover.]

In this dialogue, two verses are drawn from the *Book of Songs*, the preeminent anthology of pre-Qin Chinese poetry. The first, "窈窕淑女, 君子好逑" (A graceful lady, a good match for a gentleman), originates from *Guanjiu*, a poem conveying a man's ardent affections for a young woman. Chunxiang utilizes this verse to ascribe the cause of the illness to *junzi* (noble man). As a remedy, the scholar proposes that, considering the lady's ailment arises from *junzi*, she will find recovery through *shi junzi* (noble man *Shi* or seeds of *quisqualis indica*), referencing a verse from *Fengyu*, which expresses the felicity of a reunited couple. Thus, this section connects three cultural elements - the two lines from the *Book of Songs* and *junzi* - creating a culturally resonant sequence centered on a wordplay involving the homonyms *junzi* and *shi junzi*.

The Peony Pavilion contains over thirty instances of such puns. Frequently considered as a figurative device posing a problematic of untranslatability, puns are often rendered literally, accompanied by explanatory annotations aimed at conveying their figurative impact. That approach aligns with what Delabastita (1994: 224) terms the "dogma of untranslatability." The translator follows this convention, employing an "Adaptive Addition" with three footnotes to explain the meaning of the two lines and the homonym:

Footnote 1. The original verse reads "Worthy companion of a noble lord." Chunxiang confuses "worthy companion" with "eagerly seek" (haoqiu) because phonetically they are identical expressions.
Footnote 2. "Noble lord Shi" (Shi junzi) is a homophone for a traditional

medicine remedy: seeds of Quisqualis indica, also known as "miracle bush."
Footnote 3. The verse ("Seeing my noble lord here, how can I not recover my
health?") comes from the poem "Wind and Rain," from the Zheng airs. The poem
is about a girl's joy at seeing her beloved arrive at an adverse time.

It is significant that the translator annotates *quisqualis indica* as *miracle bush*, adding a humorous touch that effectively mirrors the ST. However, the excessive explanation of terms such as *Zheng airs* creates a monolingual dictionary effect. Since Spanish-speaking readers typically have limited familiarity with classical Chinese literature, they may not understand the term's significance. Therefore, the footnotes contribute to confusion rather than clarification for the target audience. This underscores the translator's critical task of balancing "Source-Contextualization" with "Target-Contextualization." It requires exercising discretion over the quantity and accuracy of cultural information presented in the TT. Otherwise, an overabundance of detail, however well-intentioned, can overwhelm the reader and ultimately hinder the text's readability and reception. Otherwise, an overabundance of cultural details can negatively affect the text's readability and acceptance.

In this sense, Yu (2017) has revised the Eco-Translatology, underlining the importance of target culture in cultural adaptation; that is, the translator has to both convey the ST's culture connotations and integrate them effectively into the target culture. This aligns with the House's concept of "culture filter" (1997; 2015), which refers to the need to adapt the translation to the target audience's cultural context, beliefs, and values, thus achieving functional equivalence. When touching upon translating puns, Landheer (1991) argues that a translation strategy should begin by identifying the functional load of the ST's poly-isotopic utterances and should then move to a recreative procedure that privileges maintaining both global and local isotopical cohesion over a strict replication in the target language of the double reference of individual words; consequently, he maintained that there is far less so-called "untranslatability" than is commonly assumed.

An example of going beyond the untranslatability is observed from the 2002 English translation by Cyril Birch (Tang 2002):

(6)

ST: 小姐害了「君子」的病，用的史君子。《毛詩》：「既見君子，雲胡不瘳？」這病有了君子抽一抽，就抽好了。

[The young lady has been afflicted with the illness of *junzi*, so we use *shi junzi* to treat her. The *Book of Songs* says: "Having seen the *junzi*, how could one not recover?" This illness just needs a *junzi* to smoke, and she will be cured.]

TT: The young lady's sickness was caused by a prince, so we'll use the Envoy Prince. According to the Songs, "having seen her prince, how should she not recover? All we have to do is get a prince to cover her, and she'll recover."

Instead of "Adaptive Addition," "Extending Substitution" is employed by introducing an English pun, *cover* and *recover*. By doing so, Birch shifts the original metaphorical structure from "cause of illness-cure" to "cure-effect." In doing so, the translator not only reduces the cultural distance between the ST and the TL audience but also effectively recreates the humor, preserving the functional loan embedded in the original pun. In addition, the domestication of *junzi* with *prince* evokes the story of *Sleeping Beauty*, thereby enhancing the translation's resonance with English-speaking readers.

Applying Birch's "Extending Substitution" allows for a more seamless cultural adaptation in the Spanish translation, replacing cumbersome footnotes with resonant wordplay. For instance, the original pun can be effectively recreated using the Spanish polysemy *aliviar* (relieve). Its dual meaning—referring to both recovery from illness and the satisfaction of carnal desire—perfectly captures the ST's innuendo. This strategy yields the following translation: "La enfermedad de la joven dama fue causada por un príncipe, así que usaremos al Príncipe Enviado. Según los Cantares, si ya ha visto a su príncipe, ¿cómo no habría de mejorar? Lo único que necesitamos para traerle el alivio es un príncipe que venga a aliviarla" [The young lady's sickness was caused by a prince, so we will use the Envoy Prince. According to the Songs, if she has already seen her prince, how should she not get better? The only thing we need to bring her the relief is a prince who comes to relieve her]. In this way, the metaphorical structure and the humor of the ST

are effectively revived within the TL's own cultural ecology.

6. Adaptive transformation in the communicative dimension

Eco-Translatology adopts a macroscopic perspective on the texts, focusing on how the communicative purposes embedded in the ST manifest within the TL's ecology (Lan 2018). Communicative transformation pertains to the realization of the publishing intention and/or the expected effect in TT (Hu 2020a). Commissioned by China Intercontinental Press and the China's Cultural Centre in Madrid, this translation aims to mark the 400th anniversary of Tang Xianzu's death and to present the allure of Chinese culture and literature to Spanish and broader European readers (Tang 2016: 9-17). Accordingly, the translator is tasked with reanimating the ST's spirit and central features within the TL's ecology.

As the author states in the preface, 情 (passion) constitutes the core concept of the play (Tang 1982: 1). *The Peony Pavilion* maintains enduring vitality and popularity in China—both in ancient and contemporary times—and captivates a large number of foreign readers. This lies in its exploration of "supreme passion," a universal human concern that resonates with and moves readers across diverse cultural, religious, and economic backgrounds, as well as different ages and genders (Zhu 2025).

From the Southern Song dynasty onward, the *Cheng Zhu* school enjoyed a position of orthodox authority. This school championed adherence to Confucian dogmas and the stifling of personal passion to legitimize imperial rule, generating a collection of austere practices that reached their zenith during the Ming dynasty (1368-1644). In this era, emperors and empresses zealously advanced the ideals of female virtuousness, in which even commonplace actions such as napping were considered immoral. The early sixteenth century witnessed a significant change in social attitudes with the growth of the Study of the Mind, established by Wang Yangming, who maintained that all living beings are endowed with good consciousness, stressing the innate holiness of each person, and encouraged

understanding the world through introspection. This philosophical concept achieved widespread acceptance through elevating passion as a sacred element with profound societal influence.

In the script, good consciousness is conceptualized as great passion, depicted as the impetus for all human behavior. The author prefaces the work by observing, "The origin of passion is unknown, but once it arises, it deepens; the living can die for it, and the dead can be reborn because of it" (Tang 1982: 1). This reverence of passion finds expression in Liniang's death and resurrection. As the editor Xu Shuofang explains, in a society governed by rigorous moral codes, a young woman such as Liniang, who holds nature, life, and freedom dear, is confronted with only two options: the renunciation of her authentic desires or the options of ruin (Tang 1982: 4-5). She remains true to herself: "If one loves, then love; if one lives, then live; if one dies, then die. What is there to blame in life?" (Tang 1982: 55-56). Her rebellion against feudal conventions is expressed not only in soliloquies but also in dreams that subvert the ascetic ideal.

To understand how the translator recreates the essential concept, "passion" in the TL ecology, we may analyze the translation from three perspectives: the philosophic content of "passion," the depiction of the tension between passion and moral dogmas, and the portrayal of passion that transcends life and death.

6.1. Interpretation of the concept "passion"

The preface to *The Peony Pavilion* is crucial for understanding the author's intent. In it, Tang Xianzu introduces and emphasizes the central concept of "passion," a notion embodied by the protagonist Liniang. This passion is presented as a force so potent it can transcend life and death, causing one to die for it or even be revived by it. The following excerpt, which defines this "supreme passion" from the author's perspective, will be analyzed below:

(7)
ST: 如丽娘者，乃可谓之有情人耳。情不知所起，一往而深。生者可以死，死

可以生。生而不可与死，死而不可复生者，皆非情之至也。

[People like Liniang can be said to be persons of passion. Passion does not know from where it arises; once it goes forth it becomes deep. The living can die; the dead can live. If the living cannot go to die, and the dead cannot be reborn, then it is not utmost passion.]

TT: ¡Solo de aquellos que asemejan a Du Liniang podemos decir que conocen la pasión! No sé de dónde esta nace, pero cuando lo hace, se intensifica más y más. Los vivos pueden morir por ella y por ella los muertos renacen. La pasión no es tal si el vivo no acepta morir por ella o si en su virtud el muerto no regresa a la vida.

[Only those who resemble Du Liniang can be said to know passion! I don't know where it comes from, but when it does, it intensifies more and more. The living can die for it, and for it, the dead are reborn. Passion is not such if the living does not accept dying for it or if in its virtue the dead do not return to life.]

The translator's rendering of 情 exemplifies an "Extending Substitution." This Chinese character is a typical polyseme, capable of denoting "emotion," "passion," "love," and even "situation." Since no single Spanish word covers this semantic range, the translator must discern the intrinsic meaning of the concept within the ST. This process involves carefully weighing the subtle differences between possible interpretations to select the most precise term in the TL. As Zhu (2025) notes, *The Peony Pavilion* centers not on "love" but on "passion," portraying it as a fundamental aspect of human nature (inclusive of sexual desire) embodied by a healthy, complete individual like Du Liniang. The translator's choice of *pasión* (passion) skillfully adapts 情 to the TL, capturing this sense of primal desire. It is also noteworthy that translating 起 (to begin or to arise) as *nacer* (to be born) adds metaphorical depth, aligning with the innate, almost organic, quality of this passion.

Furthermore, the translator employs "Adaptive Addition" by inserting *por ella* (for it) twice in the third sentence. This technique addresses the semantic discrepancy between Chinese and Spanish: Chinese is a paratactic language where logical relationships are often implicit, whereas Spanish is a hypotactic language that typically requires explicit connectors or prepositions. In the ST, the causal link between passion and the subsequent phrase is self-evident even without a logical

marker. In the TL, however, adding the preposition *por* (for) is necessary to explicitly articulate the causal relationship between passion and the acts of dying and being reborn.

The application of these two techniques reflects the translator's commitment to a "Target-Contextualization" strategy. This approach demonstrates thorough consideration and adaption to the TL's translational eco-environment, specifically its syntactic norms and how the audience might receive key terms.

6.2. Contrast between passion and moral principle

In *The Peony Pavilion*, the concept of "supreme passion" stands in stark contrast to the prevailing moral constraints of the era. This tension is vividly illustrated in Scene 10, where Liniang dreams of a young scholar. She is instantly in love with him, and they share a passional encounter by the river, which explicitly transgresses the societal expectation of female chastity. A portion of this scene follows:

(8)
ST:
　[旦] 那邊去?
　[生] 轉過這芍藥欄前, 緊靠著湖山石邊。
　[旦] 秀才, 去怎的?
　[生] 和你把領扣松, 衣帶寬, 袖梢兒搵著牙兒苫也, 則待你忍耐溫存一晌眠。
[(Female character): Where are we going?
(Male character): Turning past this peony fence, right by the rock near the lake and mountains.
(Female character): Scholar, why are we going there?
(Male character): To loosen your collar, untie your sash, let the tips of your sleeves brush against the mat, and simply hope you can endure a moment of tender rest.]

TT: Du Liniang: ¿Adónde vamos?
Liu Mengmei: Pasada la baranda de peonías, / junto al roquedal de Taihu.
Du Liniang: Mi señor, ¿para qué ir allí?
Liu Mengmei: Voy a / desabrochar los botones de tu cuello, / el cinto de tu falda

voy a soltar. / Cúbrete el rostro con el borde de tu manga, / muérdela con fuerza mientras aguantas / y soportas un instante con paciencia / mi tierna presencia, / para sumirte en el sueño después.

[Du Liniang: Where are we going?

Liu Mengmei: Past the peony railing, / by the Taihu rocky outcrop.

Du Liniang: My lord, why are we going there?

Liu Mengmei: I'll / undo the buttons on your collar, / undo the sash of your skirt, / cover your face with the edge of your sleeve, / bite it tightly as you bear / And endure for a moment with patience / my tender presence, / to sink into sleep afterwards.]

Following Freud's (1990) assertion that dreams offer a royal road to a knowledge of the unconscious activities of the mind, the translation of these sequences is crucial for understanding the protagonist's essence and conveying the work's communicative purpose. In the ST, the depiction of erotic dreams, once rare in Chinese literature, highlights the contradiction between societal moral restrictions and the liberation of individual passion. As the translator notes in the preface, "the dreams, the passionate love, and the death are the three pivotal axes around which narrative unfolds" (Tang 2016: 13). These erotic dreams play a vital role in developing the narrative's central argument and manifesting the core thematic concept of the play: experiencing the desire, Liniang falls in the passionate love in the dream and dies because of it.

The Spanish translation is notably faithful and uncensored, demonstrating a strong fidelity to the ST. This approach aligns with the principle of "Text-balancing Scrutinization," which seeks a comprehensive balance between the text, the translator, and the translational eco-environment. This fidelity is evident not only in the complete retention of sexual descriptions, such as "undoing the buttons and the sash of the skirt," but also in the translator's choice to render these descriptions in a poetic register appropriate to the cultural context of the TL. In this, the translator excels as a mediator between the ST and the TL's translational eco-environment, demonstrating a deep understanding of the ST's communicative purpose and careful consideration of the TL's cultural ecology.

This translational choice becomes even more significant when contextualized

within broader cultural trends. When comparing the translation of eroticism in three English versions of *The Peony Pavilion*, Lee and Ngai (2012) observe that when sexually sensitive materials of the Chinese classics are translated in English, tendencies arise concerning the translational dispositions taken by Chinese and non-Chinese translators: while non-Chinese translators typically adhere closely to the ST, Chinese translators tend to neutralize or remove such materials departing from ethical constraints. Such influence of "ethical constraints" on translational dispositions is not confined to Chinese translators but extends to the practices of translators from other East Asian countries. For example, this phenomenon is evident in the Japanese translations of the Korean classic *Chunhyangjeon*, as observed by Rho (2016). In contrast to the East Asian culture, in Spanish-speaking world, sex is viewed as a significantly intimate indicator of personal identity and a significant, tenacious component that fundamentally shapes the literature and lived experience, especially during the golden age of Spain (Martín 2008: xii).

6.3. A passion transcending life and death

The "passion" is portrayed as an unstoppable force that transcends life and death. This power finds vivid expression in Scene 23, where Liniang's soul, having yielded to her passion, descends into the underworld. There, after being judged, she is ultimately granted permission to return to the mortal world and reunite with her lover. This scene directly embodies the author's statement in the preface: "For passion, the living can die, and the dead can be reborn." In this episode, the transcendent power of passion is illustrated through a series of stark dichotomies: the underworld versus Liniang, darkness versus light, and death versus passion. An analysis of the Spanish translation of the underworld's imagery reveals the translator's adaptive strategies:

(9)
ST:

冥判	[Trail in the Naraka]
鬼门关	[Door to the Naraka]
鬼持笔	[Ghost secretary]
鬼卒	[Ghost pawns]
夜叉	[Yaksha]

TT:

Juicio en los infiernos	[Judgement in the hell]
Puerta del Infierno	[Door to the hell]
Secretario demoníaco	[Demon secretary]
Demonios	[Demons]
Yakshas[1]	[Yakshas]

Footnote [literal translation in English]:

[1] The *yaksha* (*yecha*) are a type of protective spirits of nature, who at times can be malevolent. Existing already in prior religions, Buddhism will integrate them into its doctrine.

Since Wei and Jin dynasties (220-589), the Chinese conception of the underworld has been profoundly shaped by the concept of "Naraka" from Indian Buddhism (Xiao 1989). Known as *Diyu* (地狱) or *Mingjie* (冥界), it is conceptualized as a subterranean realm where souls undergo judgment, atone for their sins, and repay their karmic debts through punishment prior to reincarnation.

The translator adopts "Extending Substitution," adapting core concepts of the Chinese underworld, such as Naraka and ghosts, to familiar equivalents in the Catholic concept of Hell. This reconstructs a terrifying realm readily comprehensible to the primarily Catholic target audience. For the translation of *yaksha*, "Adaptive Addition" is employed: a footnote is added, specifying that they "can be malevolent," thus reinforcing the dark atmosphere the ST aimed to convey.

Another noteworthy choice is the translation of the character 鬼 (ghost). Depending on the context, the translator renders this single character using two distinct Spanish terms—*demonio* (demon), as illustrated in example (9), and *alma*

(soul), as seen in example (10):

(10)
ST:

点鬼簿	[Register of ghosts]
拷鬼	[Torture of ghosts]
鬼哭	[Ghost cry]
女鬼	[Female ghost]

TT:

Registro de las ánimas	[Register of the souls]
Torturar algunas almas	[Torture some souls]
Los espíritus lloran	[Souls cry]
El alma de la muchacha	[The soul of the girl]

This distinction is by no means arbitrary; it is deliberate and context-dependent. In contrast to 鬼执笔 and 鬼卒, figures that embody the darkness and authority of the underworld, the instances of 鬼 in example (10) carry a more neutral connotation. They merely indicate status of the deceased: 点鬼簿 is the register of the dead; the 鬼 in拷鬼 and 鬼哭 are souls undergoing punishment before rebirth. Most crucially, 女鬼 specifically refers to the protagonist Liniang. Recognizing this, the translator uses the more spiritual and neutral word alma (soul). This choice effectively preserves the original dichotomy between the grim underworld and Liniang's passionate soul. Such a strategy underscores the translator's adoption of a "Target-Contextualization" approach.

7. Conclusion

From the perspective of Eco-Translatology, the Spanish translation of *The Peony Pavilion* demonstrates the principle of "survival through adaptation" (Hu 2008). The translator's preface reveals a commitment to multidimensional transformation, which guides their translational dispositions. In the linguistic dimension, the method of

"Imitationlization" is employed to revive the ST's musicality through Spanish prosody, substituting the *ping-ze* tonal pattern with twin rhymes and minimizing repetition. Simultaneously, the translator adheres to the distinct language of each character, carefully attending to the pragmatic nuances of Spanish verb conjugations and registers. In the cultural dimension, "Adaptive Addition" is used to bridge the gap between the two linguistic ecologies. In the communicative dimension, multi-transformation integrates these methods under the principle of "Text-balancing Scrutinization." In doing so, the translator acts as a mediator between the ST and the TT eco-environment, making a series of adaptations to revive the key concept of "passion" in the TT.

However, a flawless translation remains an ideal. It is observed that an excessive reliance on "Adaptive Addition" to resolve untranslatability can be counterproductive. Such a strategy may harm the delicate balance between "Source-Contextualization" and "Target-Contextualization," thereby diminishing the vitality and survival of the text in the TL's ecology. A more elegant solution, as demonstrated by the previous analysis, is the effective use of "Extending Substitution."

Notably, when handling two languages as distant as Chinese and Spanish, the translator rightly favors a strategy of "Target-Contextualization." This involves a thorough consideration of the target audience's perception and demands comprehensive adaptation at the linguistic, cultural, and communicative levels. This approach aligns with the translator's preface, which states that "some formal elements have been adapted from Chinese to Spanish." As a result, the translation is rendered accessible and engaging for its intended audience. The 2017 Marcela de Juan Chinese-Spanish Translation Award bestowed upon the Spanish translation of *The Peony Pavilion* speaks to its acceptance in the TL environment. This "survival in other life," to some degree, reflects the translator's comprehensive approach to adaptation and selection, contributing to "keeping textual life alive through translating" (Hu 2020b: 5).

Valdeón (2020: 647) observes that unlike the strong interest Chinese scholars and audiences display in Western drama, the translation of Chinese drama has attracted

comparatively little attention, in part because relatively few Chinese works have been rendered into other languages. Over a century has passed since the 1920 publication of *Book of Jade*, the first complete Spanish translation of a work of classical Chinese literature. However, there still exists a sense of strangeness among Spanish-speaking translators towards Chinese culture, coupled with inadequate translations and limited readership of translated works (Hou and Zhang 2015). Eco-Translatology, in this setting, offers both a comprehensive perspective and methodological guidance for translators. Considering the significant linguistic and cultural gaps, as well as readers' often limited familiarity with the source culture, careful attention to the target environment is necessary for the survival of translations. The art of translation hinges on balance and adaptation—qualities born of human wisdom, not algorithms. As AI increasingly favors linguistic homogenization, it flattens the very creativity that gives literature its power. Consequently, the human translator's role in rendering complex literary works is reaffirmed as central, preserving the nuance and artistry that automated systems cannot replicate. We look forward to that the future Spanish renderings of classical Chinese drama, such as *The Peony Pavilion*, expand the resources for comparative analysis, offering valuable perspectives on how selection in translation influences the adaptation and the survival of these works across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

References

Appiah, K. A. (2021). Thick translation. In L. Venuti (ed.), *The Translation Studies Reader*. London: Routledge, 339-351.

Bassnett-McGuire, S. (1998). Still trapped in the labyrinth: further reflections on translation and theatre. In Bassnett-McGuire, S. and A. Lefevere (eds.), *Constructing cultures: Essays on literary translation*. Multilingual Matters, 90-108.

Bassnett-McGuire, S. (2014). Ways through the labyrinth: strategies and methods for translating theatre texts. In Hermans, T. (ed.), *The Manipulation of Literature (Routledge Revivals)*. Routledge, 87-102.

Birch, C. (1995). *Reflections of a Working Translator*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Chang, J. and Zhang, Z. (2020). English translations of The Peony Pavilion, a traditional Chinese opera: different strategies for different purposes. *Translation Review* 106(1): 35-49.

Delabastita, D. (1994). Focus on the pun: wordplay as a special problem in translation studies. *Target International Journal of Translation Studies* 6(2): 223-243.

Freud, S. (1990). *The Interpretation of Dreams*. London: Hogarth Press.

Fu, J. (2023). Action/system/function: a sociological approach to eco-translatology. *Chinese Translators Journal* 44(5): 26-34.

García Garzón, J. I. (2017). The dream is life. (online) Retrieved from https://www.abc.es/cultura/cultural/abci-sueno-vida-201701190128_noticia.html?ref=h ttps%3A%2F%2Fwww.abc.es%2Fcultura%2Fcultural%2Fabci-sueno-vida-201701190 128_noticia.html on 25 March 2025.

Guo, C. (2023). On the Korean translation of Qu Sao in the context of eco-translatology: a case study of three Korean versions. PhD dissertation, Beijing Foreign Studies University.

Halliday, M. A. K. (1964). Comparison and translation. In Halliday, M. A. K., M. McIntosh, and P. Strevens (eds.), *The Linguistic Sciences and Language Teaching*. London: Longman, 111-137.

Hatim, B. and Mason, I. (1997). *The Translator as Communicator*. London/New York: Routledge.

Hou, J. and Zhang, Q. (2015). A preliminary study on the translation of Chinese classical literature in Spain. *Translation Forum* 4: 81-86.

House, J. (1997). *Translation quality assessment: a model revisited*. Tübingen: Gunter Knar.

House, J. (2015, June). Translation as cultural communication. Paper presented at the 5th international symposium on Eco-translatology of Chang Jung Christian University, Tainan City.

Hu, G. (2001, December). Initial exploration of the theory of translation as adaptation and selection. Paper presented at the Third Asian Translator's Forum, Hong Kong.

Hu, G. (2003). Translation as adaptation and selection. *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology* 11(4): 283-291.

Hu, G. (2004). 'Translator-centredness.' *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology* 12(2): 106-117.

Hu, G. (2006). Exemplifying the translation principle and translation methods of adaptation and

selection theory. *Foreign Languages and Their Teaching* 3: 49-52.

Hu, G. (2008). Interpreting the theory through its terminologies: an overview of the adaptation and selection theory. *Shanghai Journal of Translators* 2: 1-5.

Hu, G. and Tao, Y. (2016). Eco-translatology: a new paradigm of eco-translation - a comparative study on approaches to translation studies. *T&I REVIEW* 6: 115-132.

Hu (Hugs), G. (2020a). *Eco-Translatology: towards an eco-paradigm of translation studies*. Springer.

Hu, G. (2020b). Keeping textual life alive through 'transplanting.' *Chinese Translators Journal* 5: 5-13.

Hu, G. (2021). The *Dao* of "eco-life"-oriented translation: tackling three philosophical questions about eco-translatology. *Chinese Translators Journal* 6: 6-14.

Hu, G. and Li, X. (2024). System modeling and graphical presentation in theoretical construction of eco-translatology. *Chinese Translators Journal* 4: 5-14.

Hu, G. (2025). Research on the sustainable development of eco-translatology: prologue to the sequel eco-translatology: translation Dao and translation art. *Journal of Beijing International Studies University* 47(3): 1-16.

Hu, G. and Wang, Y. (2025). The reconstruction and adaptation of China's translation ecology in the AI context: an eco-translatology perspective. *Computer-Assisted Foreign Language Education in China* 222(2): 3-9.

Kong, S. (2016). *The Peach Blossom Fan*. Shanghai: Shanghai Ancient Books Publishing House.

Labov, W. (1966). *The Social Stratification of English in New York City*. Washington: Center for Applied Linguistics.

Lan, D. (2018). A study on the translation of political terminology in the perspective of eco-translatology. *Journal of Zhoukou Normal University* 35(4): 51-56.

Landheer, R. (1991). Poly-isotopy as a translation problem. In Jovanovic, M. (ed.), *Translation, a Creative Profession: Proceedings XIIth World Congress of FIT-Belgrade*. Beograd: Prevodilac, 133-140.

Leal de Rodríguez, C. and Guerra de Muzza, D. A. (1981). *Redaction II*. Nuevo León: Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León.

Lee, T.-K. and Ngai, C. S. B. (2012). Translating eroticism in traditional Chinese drama: three English versions of The Peony Pavilion. *Babel* 58(1): 73-94.

Levy, J. D. (1982). Review: the Peony Pavilion. *The Hudson Review* 35(2): 314-318.

Liu, L. (2019). Relinque Eleta, Alicia (ed. y trad.), El pabellón de las peonías, Beijing: China International Press, 2016, pp.1089, ISBN: 978-7-5085-3540-1. *Hikma* 18(2): 337-341.

Liu, L. (2020). La intervención del traductor en la difusión del teatro tradicional chino: pasado y presente (Translator's intervention in the dissemination of Chinese traditional theater: past and present). *Hikma* 19(2): 117-133.

Martín, A. L. (2008). *An Erotic Philology of Golden Age Spain*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press.

Newmark, P. (1981). *Approaches to Translation*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Nida, E. A. (1993). *Language, Culture, and Translating*. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.

Nida, E. A. and Taber, C. R. (1969). *The Theory and Practice of Translation*. Leiden: E. J. Brill.

Poyatos, F. (1976). Analysis of a culture through its culturemes: theory and method. In McCormack W. C., and S. A. Wurm (eds.), *Language and Man*. Mouton, 313-322.

Rho, K. (2016). Translation of Choonhyang-Jeon by Japanese writers in early 20th century. *Journal of Korean Literature* 34: 31-62.

Shi, X. (2017). Artistic dimension of eco-translatology and its transformation. *Social Scientist* 10: 156-160.

Tian, X. (2025). A study of the translation and dissemination of shijing in Spanish-speaking countries. *International Sinology* 4: 15-28.

Valdeón, R. A. (2020). Literary translation research in China. *Perspectives* 28(5): 645-658.

Venuti, L. (1992). *Rethinking Translation: Discourse, Subjectivity, Ideology*. London: Routledge.

Vermeer, H. J. (1989). Skopos and commission in translational action (A. Chesterman, Trans.). In Chesterman, A. (ed.), *Readings in Translation Theory*. Helsinki: Oy Finn Lectura Ab.

Wong, D. and Shen, D. (1999). Factors influencing the process of translating. *Meta* 44(1): 78-100.

Xiao, D. (1989). *Conceptions of Heaven and Hell in Buddhism and Daoism during the Han, Wei, and Six Dynasties*. Taipei: Taiwan Student Book.

Yang, C. and Hu, G. (2024). The English translation of scenic spots and the promotion of local international image from the perspective of Eco-translatology. *Journal of Xi'an International Studies University* 32(4): 109-113.

Yu, Z. (2017). Translation as adaptation and selection: a feminist case. *Perspectives: Studies in Translation Theory and Practice* 25(1): 49-65.

Zeitlin, J. T. (1994). Shared dreams: the story of the three wives' commentary on The Peony Pavilion. *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 54(1): 127-179.

Zhou, Y. (2022). Review of the translations of The Peony Pavilion. *Masterpieces Review* 20: 110-113.

Zhu, H. (2025). Why has *The Peony Pavilion* remained an evergreen masterpiece? *Drama (The Journal of the Central Academy of Drama)* 3: 34-51.

[Analyzed Texts]

Tang, X. (1982). *The Peony Pavilion* (S. Xu, and X. Yang, eds.). Beijing: People's Literature Publishing House.

Tang, X. (2002). *The Peony Pavilion: Mudan Ting, Second Edition* (C. Birch, ed. and trans.). Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Tang, X. (2016). *The Peony Pavilion: or the History of the Soul that Returned* (A. R. Eleta, ed. and trans.). Madrid: Editorial Trotta, S. A.

Authors' email addresses

ruichen.zhou@hotmail

guochangyu0520@163.com

About the authors

Ruichen Zhou (first author) is a PhD candidate at the Autonomous University of Madrid and an Expert Member of the Translators Association of China. His research interests include Spanish impersonal structures and the Spanish translation of Chinese literature. Changyu Guo (corresponding author) received his PhD from Beijing Foreign Studies University and is currently a postdoctoral researcher at Shandong University. His interests include Eco-translatology and the dissemination of the Chu Ci in South Korea.