



Les Mousserables 123
SESAME STREET

PARODY

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Content

- Background
- Approach
- Translation strategies
- Difficulties in translation
- Technical issues
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Background


Original video:

- Sesame Street: Les Mousserables (Les Mis Parody)
- Cookie monster's parody movie preview of *Les Miserables* 《孤星淚》



Background: Sesame Street

- Famous characters: Elmo, Cookie Monster, Big Bird, ...
- Reaches millions of children every day in more than 150 countries.
- Mission: "use the educational power of media to help children everywhere reach their highest potential."
- Programs: "focus on topics that help young children and families develop critical skills for lifelong learning."



About the source video

Educational
 Target: Children (Preschool kids and above)

Teaches children about :

- Emotions (e.g. Sadness, jealousy)
- How to observe other people's emotions
- Sharing with others

About the source video

Content:

- Conversations + short songs

Language:

- Simple English

Cookie monster's signature speaking style:

- I = "Me"
- My= "Me"
- Simple French (due to the French setting of Les Mis)

Translation approach

Target Audience: Hong Kong youngsters and primary students

- Audience-centered
- Increase readability and appreciation

Style and Tone:

- Neutral
- Written Chinese vs spoken Chinese
- Humorous and funny

Translation Strategies

1. Addition
2. Omission
3. Idioms and four word expression
4. Loan Words
5. Onomatopoeic Words
6. Transliteration
7. Inter-textuality
8. Rhyming
9. Word Play and Pun



Title Translation - Intertextuality

- For Cantonese audience, "Les Miserables" is famously known as 「孤星淚」, while it is called 「悲慘世界」 for Mainland audience

Initial consideration:

1. 曲星淚
2. 曲奇的悲慘世界



- Our target audience are HK primary kids and teenagers
- The 2nd one is too long and clumsy
- We decide to use 曲星淚 → Direct and well-known

Proper Name Translation - Word play & pun

Proper Names:

1. *Jean Bon Bon* → 鍾畢邦

「畢邦」 puns with 「不幫」

- Create a self-centered and unhelpful image



2. *Flantine* → 法甸

「法甸」 puns with 「發癲」

- Draw audience attention to her behaviors and characteristics



- The name 「法甸」 also carries feminine features

*we thought of translating it as 「芬田」, but the humorous effect is not created

Proper Name Translation - Transliteration

- For some proper names, we have applied *transliteration technique*

Proper Names:

1. *Epipenine* → 伊佩憐

- The last character 「憐」 creates a sorrowful image



2. *Enjelfood* → 安也夫

- Previous consideration: 戀又苦; inappropriate

*Simply transliterate the character name



Proper phrase translation

Line no.	ST	TT
1.	The following preview has rated ME for mixed emotions.	以下預告內容涉及複雜情感

- In HK media industry, we can usually see the proper phrase of PG warning stating:

「以下節目內容涉及暴力/成人情節/不當行為, 敬請留意。」

have mixed emotions/feelings about -to be unsure about whether you like or agree with something or someone 對...懷有複雜[矛盾]的感情

Mixed Emotions

→ We have translated it as 「複雜情感」

→ Previous consideration: 「五味雜陳」; Keep the above sentence structure which HK audience is familiar with

Addition

Line no.	ST	TT
37	Well, just look up.	抬起頭來·樂觀點吧

“Look up” here is polysemy:

1. Be optimistic and cheer up
2. Lift up your head and look

• Previous consideration:

1. 樂觀向上點吧
2. 向上看吧

*The meanings of the above translation are not thorough and inclusive

Expand the sentence and add extra meaning:

→ 抬起頭來·樂觀點吧



Omission

Factors considered:

1. Avoid staying clumsy and exceeding the word limit
2. Keep the sentence short and concise

Line 17 But not everyone in France was as happy as Jean Bon-Bon

- 但非全國人都如畢邦高興 ✓
- 但非法國的人都如畢邦高興 ✗

Line 31 She, um... well, me cry and hug meself when me feeling sad.

- 噫..... 鵝傷心時會這樣做 ✓
- 噫..... 鵝傷心時會環抱自己·放聲大哭 ✗

*This action was mentioned in line 27

Line no.	ST	TT
27.	She crying and she hugging,	她環抱自己·放聲大哭

Omission

Omitted some interjection (嘆詞) and discourse marker

Line no.	ST	TT
Line 31	She, um... well, me cry and hug meself when me feeling sad.	噫..... 鵝傷心時會這樣做
Line 37	Well, just look up.	抬起頭來·樂觀點吧
Line 42	Well, what about those cookies?	那麼這些曲奇呢?
Line 59	Oh, well, she try to take me cookies.	她想拿鵝的曲奇

- Only discourse markers that carry no meaning
- Keep the sentence short and concise

Loan Words

Some French expression in the text are not easily translated

Line no.	ST	TT
13.	Oh là là!	Oh là là! (嗚啦啦!)
14.	That French for cowabunga!	即是法文的「太好了!」

Oh là là! Is a French expression meaning:

- Oh Dear
- Oh my
- Oh No

*To express any moderately strong reaction to something

*We want to retain the special French expression in our translation, and we add similar sound in Chinese

Idioms and four-word expression

- Widely acceptable and understandable among Chinese audience
- Concise and save word space

Line no.	ST	TT
Line 5	a French guy who is very sad because he had no cookies.	因沒有曲奇而鬱鬱寡歡的故事
Line 36	but I don't have any to give her.	我卻愛莫能助
Line 47	Cookie Monster was so happy he had cookies,	甜餅怪得償所願·歡喜若狂
Line 49	On my own, wishing I had cookies.	形單隻影·盼可得到曲奇
Line 52	Suddenly, Jean Bon-Bon understood what Epienine was feeling.	畢邦恍然大悟
Line 93	Am me monster who doesn't care?	是漠不關心的怪獸?

Onomatopoeia 擬聲詞

Line no.	ST	TT
16.	(Om-nom-nom)	(嚓嚓嚓.....)

- “嚓嚓嚓” is similar to the loud crunchy sound of eating cookies

- Research on some other onomatopoeia that resemble the sound of eating:

-吧唧吧唧

-滋滋

-嘎嘎



Lyrics translation

1st strategy (Same pace and rhythm):

Line no.	ST	TT
6.	Look down, look down.	垂頭！尋找！
7.	No cookies anywhere.	到處都鬧餅荒
8.	Look down, look down.	垂頭！喪氣！
9.	Me tummy in despair!	鵝肚子餓到慌！

2nd strategy (7-word construction):

Line no.	ST	TT
17.	I dreamed a dream of cream gone by,	我憶昔日忌廉夢
18.	A cookie I could give my daughter.	夢中曲奇贈女兒
19.	Not having cookies makes me sad,	今沒曲奇令我悲
20.	Makes my eyes fill up with water.	使我眼眶淚盈盈

Rhyming

In translating the lyrics, we have considered the use of rhyming scheme.

- Usual practice of song lyrics
- Arouse phonemic awareness among audience
- Develop a recognizable pattern

Line no.	ST	TT
6.	Look down, look down.	垂頭！尋找！
7.	No cookies anywhere.	到處都鬧餅荒
8.	Look down, look down.	垂頭！喪氣！
9.	Me tummy in despair!	鵝肚子餓到慌！

Not much rhyming: Faithful translation is **more important** than literary technique

Difficulties in translation

Word play

Line no.	ST	TT
22	Oh, actually, me not so sure.	噢·其實鵝不太肯定
91	Who me am?	鵝是誰？

- Pronouns referring to itself e.g. "I", "I am", "my" ⇒ "me"

Solutions:

- 1) 吾: Classical Chinese; Too literary ⇒ Opposite effect
- 2) 鵝: Famous reference from 麥兜校歌 e.g. "鵝滿是快烙滴好耳痛"

- Maintain humorous effect and evoke resonance



Grammatical errors

Line no.	ST	TT
52	She sad.	她失落
83	They angry!	他們憤怒！
99.	...me share cookies.	...鵝分享曲奇

- Should be "She is sad", "They are angry", "...I will share cookies"

Render the same effect as ST by same structure

- ✘ 她感到失落 or 他們感到憤怒 or 鵝願意分享曲奇
- Recreate style which imitates children's way of expression

Special term

Line no.	ST	TT
102	S' mores for everybody.	棉花糖夾餅·人人有份

"S'more" is a kind of French dessert

- Made of melted marshmallow and chocolate pressed between 2 biscuits

Full translation: 巧克力棉花糖夾餅

- Approach: Omission
- Translation: 棉花糖夾餅



Source text ambiguity

Line no.	ST	TT
103	One day s' more!	就在今天!
104	One day s' more, one day s' more!	「棉棉」不絕·就在今天!

Original lyrics from *Les Misérables*: One day more 只待明天
 ⇒ Characters have to wait for tomorrow to have s'mores? No

Possibility: One day s' more = Enjoy one day of s'mores



Source text ambiguity

Line no.	ST	TT
103	One day s' more!	就在今天!
104	One day s' more, one day s' more!	「棉棉」不絕·就在今天!

Pun with idiom

- 綿綿不絕 ⇒ 「棉棉」不絕
- 「棉棉」 is a repetitive word carrying meaning of 「棉花糖」
- Enjoy lots of s'mores
- Create a joyful and fruitful atmosphere for the ending



Source text ambiguity

Line no.	ST	TT
34.	Because my daughter Creamette, she lost cookies,	女兒小忌廉失去了曲奇

Meaning of "lost" - Oxford Online Dictionary:

- Unable to find
- That has been taken away or cannot be recovered

3 Suggestions:

- 遺失: Unknown whether Creamette has mislaid her cookies
- 沒有: Not provided in the literal meaning of "lost"
- 失去: Neutral

Technical Issues

Software used:

- Keepvid: <http://keepvid.com/>
- Subtitle Workshop 6.0b
- Format Factory 格式工廠 3.6.0

Manageable for beginners 😊

✓ Download YouTube videos as different format

✓ Download subtitles

Save as: Subrib XXX.srt

-Bold
-Italic
-Underline

Subtitle Workshop

- Easy to use
- Able to Bold, *Italic*, Underline subtitles
- Reminds users of possible errors:
 - E.g. subtitle duration too short, pause time too short etc.
- Adjusting cue in/cue out time

Concentration + patience = success !

Customizing Font style in Format Factory

