

Study on Poetry Translation in *My Brilliant Career* under Eco-translatology

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Abstract

My Brilliant Career is the maiden work of Australian writer Miles Franklin. The portrayal of the Australian women's jungle life in the work is deeply authentic. The poems interspersed in different chapters of the novel not only enrich the form of expression, but also push the emotion expressed by the protagonist to a climax. According to Eco-translatology, this paper try to discuss the translation strategies of English poetry in *My Brilliant Career* by Huang Yuanshen.

Keywords

Chinese Translation of English Poetry; *My Brilliant Career*; Eco-translatology.

1. Introduction

Miles Franklin has created twelve novels in total. *My Brilliant Career* is the most famous one, which has high literary value and profound influence, and is known as "the first Australian novel". From the perspective of the protagonist Sybylla, the novel "depicts the distress and struggle she experienced in the boring jungle environment, as well as her character of pursuing independent personality and being full of rebellious spirit, and through this image shaping, the novel truly reflects the Australian social outlook in the late 19th century" (Huang Yuanshen, 2007:2). The Chinese version of the novel was translated by Professor Huang Yuanshen. Since it was published by Jiangxi People's Publishing House in 1989, *My Brilliant Career* has received the attention and analysis of many domestic scholars, focusing on the analysis and interpretation of the heroine image, novel theme, text wording and other contents. However, it is worth noting that at present, no other scholars have studied the original and translated works from the perspective of translation studies. This paper intends to study the poetry in the works from the perspective of translatology, analyze the translator's multi-dimensional adaptation and adaptive selection with the Eco-translatology proposed by Hu Gengshen as the guiding theory, and sort out the translation strategies used by the translator in the translation process from the three dimensions of language, culture and communication.

2. Overview of Eco-translatology

Eco-translatology is an interdisciplinary theoretical research based on social and academic development. Composed of the Chinese concept of "harmony between man and nature" with the principle of "adaptive selection" of western biological evolutionism, Eco-translatology not only has the characteristics of interflow between Chinese and western cultures, but also integrates natural science and humanities, providing a new perspective for scholars to study translation and promoting the development of translation science at home and abroad. The research objects of Eco-translatology mainly include translation ecology, textual ecology and ecology of "translation community", which respectively correspond to the research of environment of target language, translations and translators. Eco-translatology emphasizes the integrity of translational eco-environment, the life of translations and the selectivity of translators. Translation is "a selection activity of the translator's adaptation to fit the

translational eco-environment". (Hu Gengshen, 2003:284). In the process of translation, the translator should mainly focus on transformations of "three dimensions", namely, language dimension, culture dimension and communicative dimension. With cyclical alternations of adaptation and selection, translation can not be eliminated in the translational eco-environment.

3. Translator's Adaptive Selection in Poetry Translation of My Brilliant Career

In Ecotranslatology the second step of the translation process is "the translational eco-environment 'selects' the translation as the translator has pride of place" (Hu Gengshen, 2020:86). On the premise of having been selected by the translational eco-environment in the first step, in the second step, the translator is with the standing of the translational eco-environment to select to the final form of translation.

3.1. Adaptive Selection and Transformation in Language Dimension

The adaptive transformation of language dimension refers to "the translator's adaptive transformation of language form in the process of translation, which is carried out in different aspects and levels". (Hu Gengshen, 2011:8) In poetry translation, translators should pay attention to the adaptive choice transformation in the overall form of poetry and the choice of words.

Example 1:

The toad beneath the harrow knows
Exactly where each tooth-point goes.
The butterfly upon the road
Preaches contentment to the toad. (Miles Franklin, 2012:63)

Translation:

耙子下的蛤蟆知道得清楚，
每一根耙齿通往何处。
道路上的蝴蝶对蛤蟆诉说，
自己如何心满意足。(Huang Yuanshen, 2007: 44)

This is an allegorical poem written by the protagonist after she moved into an isolated environment. In which the people around the protagonist are compared to ignorant toads, and the pretentious big men to butterflies, insinuating their false words of praise for ordinary people. Although the form of the poetry is concise, it clearly and powerfully shows the emotions that the protagonist wants to highlight.

English, the original poetic language, is hypotaxis, which needs the help of linguistic forms such as relational words, conjunctions and prepositions to connect the grammatical and logical relations between words and sentences. Poetry has strict requirements on the control of the number of words in two adjacent lines. The first two lines of this poem are six words in each line, and the second two lines are five words in each line, forming a rigorous symmetrical beauty of words. In addition, two lines of the poem make one sentence, that is, the first and second lines of the poetry form one sentence, while the third and fourth lines of the poem form the other sentence. Then the first sentence and the second sentence have the symmetrical beauty of "subject-predicate-object" structure, and the subject part is in the form of "noun-locative preposition-noun", which can achieve the comparative effect in content.

There is a great difference between Chinese and English language systems. Chinese emphasizes parataxis, and Chinese poems seldom adapt the means of connection, which emphasizes the

invisible logic. Therefore, when Huang Yuanshen dealt with the translation, due to the deletion of connecting words and so on, although the arrangement of words could not be completely consistent with that of the original text, the beauty of symmetry in the number of words and the beauty of antithesis between sentences were almost preserved. Judging from the number of words, the first and third lines of Translation 1 are all with eleven words, while the second and fourth lines have similar numbers of words, namely nine words and eight words respectively. From the comparison of sentences, the Translation 1 is divided into two sentences, in which “耙子下的” and “道路上的” are adverbial correspondence, “蛤蟆” and “蝴蝶” are subject correspondence, “知道” and “对……诉说” are predicate correspondence, and the contend of second and fourth lines respectively are object correspondence, reaching the same level of beauty in language dimension as the original.

3.2. Adaptive Selection and Transformation in Cultural Dimension

Cultural adaptation requires that “the translator should pay attention to the transmission and interpretation of bilingual cultural connotations in the process of translation”. (Hu Gengshen, 2011:8) Domestication and foreignization are common translation methods when dealing with words with cultural color. Translators need to take one method to make the adaptive selection and transformation in cultural dimension so that readers won't meet the tackle in comprehension of the poem.

Example 2:

Is it wise, then, say, in the waning day,
When the vessel is crack'd and old,
To cherish the battered potter's clay
As though it were virgin gold?
Take care of yourself, dull, boorish elf,
Though prudent and sage you seem;
Your pitcher will break on the musty shelf,
And mine by the dazzling stream. (Miles Franklin, 2012:64)

Translation :

岁月逝去，罐子开裂老化，
珍惜这破碎的陶土，
仿佛它是一块纯金，
但这样做可是明智？
保重吧，愚钝的精灵，
虽然你似乎谨慎而贤明。
你的罐子将摔破在腐朽的架子上方，
而我的，将摔破在耀眼的溪流旁。(Huang Yuanshen, 2007: 44)

This poem depicts the author's attitude towards life. The aging jar will eventually break and everyone will eventually die. Whether choosing a peaceful but featureless and idle life, or choosing another life that will be risky but can “get water”, and valuable is question worthy to think about for everybody.

“Literary works in different countries carry different cultures and customs, and the translation of literary works is also one aspect of cultural communication.” (Yang Fan, 2018:80) The huge cultural differences between China and the West are often one of the important factors that poetry can't fully convey the connotation of poetry. There is a certain amount of background knowledge behind every cultural vocabulary. If the reader's knowledge system lacks relevant background, it will cause readers' obstacles in cognition and deviations in understanding of the

poetry. The word “elf” in the original poem has the unique cultural connotation of the West, and the translator adopts the strategy of foreignization to translate it into “精灵”. After a long period of cultural exchanges between China and the West, the word “elf” has formed a certain cultural outline in China, and it is a kind of western myth with smart appearance and wisdom. However, the poet here uses allegory to compare the beautiful but untalented aristocratic woman to “elf” in the poetry. Although they seem smart and beautiful, they are actually stupid, unable to choose their own life, and can only do nothing for a lifetime. The translation method of foreignization is based on a consideration to the acceptance of Chinese readers, which not only retains the unique cultural characteristics of the word in western countries, but also faithfully expresses the irony that the original text hopes to express, thus realizing the adaptive selection and transformation in the cultural dimension.

3.3. Adaptive Selection and Transformation in Communicative Dimension

The communicative adaptability transformation requires that “the translator should pay attention to the adaptive selection and transformation of bilingual communicative intention in the process of translation”. (Hu Gengshen. 2011:8) In the process of translation, the translator should not only pay attention to the expression of language information and cultural connotation, but also pay attention to the transformation in the communicative dimension, that is, whether the purpose of the original communication can be achieved.

Example 3:

The world is filled with folly and sin,
And love must cling where it can, I say;
For beauty is easy enough to win,
But one isn't loved every day, (Miles Franklin, 2012:372)

Translation :

世界充满了愚蠢和罪过，
我说呀，爱应当系于能系的地方，
因为美貌可以轻易到手，
人却不是日日被他人爱慕。(Huang Yuanshen, 2007: 267)

This poem is quoted from the poem of the English poet Owen Meredith. When facing the confession of her sweetheart, Sybylla uses it to show that she clearly knows what her sweetheart means that he doesn't care whether Sybylla is beautiful or not, but Sybylla's sincere personality. Even so, Sybylla still refuses her sweetheart, and this poem highlights Sybylla's ambivalence at this time.

The success of communicative transformation depends on whether the target text translated by translator can achieve the same communicative goal as the source text, that is, “whether the target readers can feel the original intention of the original author by reading the target text, and resonate with the original readers emotionally and ideologically.” (Yang Fan, 2018:80) The whole poem of the original text is straightforward, concise and clear. “I say” in the second line of the original sentence is located at the end of the sentence, taking into account the overall beauty of the poem. The first three lines all make use of inanimate subject and the active voice, and the last sentence makes use of animate subject but uses the passive voice to form a strong visual and perceptual contrast effect. Huang Yuanshen adjusts the word order and style on the basis of respecting the meaning of poetry sentences when dealing with the translation. “我说呀” in translation is located at the beginning of the second line of the poem. The translator considers the ideological origin of Chinese “people-oriented” and emphasizes the subjectivity of human beings. The modal particle “呀” adds a hint of persuasion, showing Sybylla's vacillating psychological state between self-persuasion and persistent refusal when facing the confession

of his sweetheart. “easy enough to win” expresses disdain for “beauty”, and Huang Yuanshen adopts free translation, translating “easy enough to win” into “轻易到手”, which is more in line with the target readers’ cognition and is convenient for readers to show the original intention of the author.

4. Conclusion

Based on Eco-translatology, this paper analyzes the translation strategies of English poems in *My Brilliant Career*. From the perspective of language, on the basis of postponing the layout and typesetting of the source language poetry, Huang Yuanshen successfully transformed the poetry translation into a language suitable for the reading habits of the target language readers, which was concise, clear, fluent and easy to read. From the perspective of culture, the translation does not blindly pursue the domestication effect that suits the readers’ culture, but adopts the method of foreignization in consideration of the acceptance degree of western culture in China, which respects the original culture without losing the exotic style of poetry. From the perspective of communication, the translator shows the emotional attitude that the source language author wants to shape through rhythmic rhythm by exerting the characteristics of the target language. Through the analysis of three dimensions, it shows how the translated version adapts to the style of the source language and the rules of the target language, and what translation strategies are used, so as to achieve a high degree of holistic adaptation and selection of the translated version.

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