

A Study on Translator's Subjectivity of Dream of Red Mansions Based on Polysystem Theory

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Abstract

With the development of The Times, translation studies are no longer limited to text and syntax, but have expanded from in-text studies to out-of-text studies. Translation activities are carried out in two cultural contexts. Therefore, from a new translation perspective, the translation process pays more attention to the target language culture and the influence of various social, cultural and economic factors on translation activities, thus developing the translator's subjectivity. The status of the translator is gradually revealed, which makes the translation closer to the target language culture and expands the target audience. Based on the comparison between traditional translation theory and multi-system theory, this paper takes the translation of Dream of Red Mansions as an example, and has an in-depth study of the translator's subjectivity in the translation process through comparison and analysis, emphasizing the important effect of the translator's subjectivity in translation activities, so as to provide references for how to produce high-quality text translation.

Keywords

Translator's Subjectivity; Traditional Translation Studies; Polysystem Theory; Dream of Red Mansions.

1. Introduction

In traditional translation field, it is generally accepted that translation is a specific and limited to the level of language use, is not affected by other factors such as economy, politics, culture. So the translation process reflects the flexible use and practice of translation skills, eventually to the contents of a kind of language expression expressed in another language faithfully and accurately. In the field of traditional translation, language determines the idea of world outlook and thought is deeply rooted in the hearts of the people, so in most people's view, translation can't have the slightest change. At the same time, the author is a master, a translator is a servant, and status of the original author was obviously higher than that of the translator, the main role of the translator is fuzzy and weakening, which also spawns "untranslatability" point of view that we should be "faithful to the original," but the faithfulness is rigid and inflexible, lack of flexibility.

In the 1970s, Even-Zohar put forward the Polysystem Theory, which is derived from Russian formalism and Czech structuralism and translated as "overarching system" in English. The theory of multiple systems holds that a complex system is not just the simple sum of its components. It is determined by the interactions and feedbacks between these parts[1]. This theoretical framework emphasizes the interactions within the system and between the system and the environment, and the impact of these interactions on the overall behavior of the system. The multi-theoretical system in translation reflects the diversity and complexity in different linguistic and cultural contexts. It involves the interaction of language, culture, society and cognition, and puts forward higher requirements for translation work. At the same time, Zohar shows that both systems and hierarchies are dynamic rather than static, indicating that both

systems and hierarchies change over time. When innovative literature becomes the highest level, the conservative, traditional genre may become the lower level correspondingly. When translated literature takes the lead, the center of the multi-system will be shaped and recast correspondingly, and this change will also bring unprecedented influence and change to society and culture. Similarly, when translated literature plays a secondary role in a pluralistic system, it becomes a relatively conservative element of the system and has less impact on the central system[2].

2. The Relationship Between Traditional Translation Studies and Translators

In traditional translation studies, translators are usually in a restricted state. They are seen as subordinate to the original author, and all work is in the service of the source text. Fidelity to the original text is their credo, and translators need to be assigned and empowered to express themselves on behalf of others, but the scope of their actual freedom is very limited. Hermans mentions the traditional mainstream translation concept in his article "The Translator's Voice in Translation Narratives". Translation is considered to be the reproduction of the source text, which should not only be in harmony with the source text, but also maintain a consistent degree of coincidence to maintain the integrity of the source text. A translator needs to hide his own existence, and a translator who "forgets himself" is a good translator. Therefore, in such an environment, translators cannot exert their power in the translation work. At the same time, in the process of translation, we will find many foreign cultural phenomena, which are very difficult to translate and even untranslatable. In this case, if we always keep faithful to the principle of not making any changes to the original text, it will certainly bring confusion and incomprehension to the target language readers. At the same time, from the perspective of translation, not only the writing is not smooth, but also lack of readability, which eventually leads to the loss of a large number of audiences and readers, and can not build a bridge to convey culture. From this point of view, the traditional theory of translation studies has considerable infeasibility and limitations, overemphasizing the fidelity of the text form while ignoring the fidelity of the content, which will eventually make the text unable to convey the expressed meaning and lose its soul[3]. Therefore, in order to give translators more space to exert their subjective initiative and produce more high-quality translation works, the theory of pluralistic translation studies will help translators to the greatest extent, so that translators can play the main role and exert their subjective initiative at key moments, fully mobilize their various abilities, and solve the problems in the translation process through the application of different translation strategies.

3. Translator's Subjectivity from Polysystem Theory

When translated literature plays an important role in the pluralistic system of literature, translators are not limited by traditional translation concepts, but are willing to try to break through and adopt the theory of foreignization to carry out translation. In this process, the theory of alienation can help translators realize the social and cultural significance behind the translation, so as to guide them to better choose appropriate translation strategies and reduce the occurrence of alienation. Through the inspiration of the theory of alienation, translators can learn more about the social meaning and cultural connotation of the original text, so as to better maintain the spirit and style of the original text. Venuti proposed that domestication and foreignization strategies refer to the two extremes occupied by the translated text in the target language and the target culture respectively[4]. Naturalized translation works emphasize fluency, and the translator's goal is to make the work transparent and pure, without any traces of translation. Foreignizing translation works, on the other hand, pay more attention to

exoticism, and readers' expectations of the target language are in a secondary position, so the foreignizing strategy ignores the mainstream values in the target language. The selection of translation strategies shows the translator's subjectivity and subjective initiative in different environments.

4. Translator's Subjectivity

According to the Translator's subjectivity: A Hermeneutic Interpretation, the translator's subjectivity is described as follows: "The translator's subjectivity refers to the influence of the translator's subjectivity, individuality and cultural background on translation activities. Subjectivity enables different translators to produce different translations when facing the same original text, because each translator will make unique choices according to his knowledge, experience, values, emotions and other factors" [5]. They also hold a similar view in on the Translator's Subjectivity: From the Marginalization of the Translator's Cultural Status. They believe that the translator's subjectivity refers to the subjective initiative of the translator, who is the subject of translation, in order to realize the purpose of translation under the premise of respecting the translation object. The basic characteristics of translators' subjectivity include conscious cultural awareness, humanistic character and creativity in culture and aesthetics [6].

4.1. Introduction to the Translation of Dream of Red Mansions

From 1830 to 1986, a total of nine English translations have been published, of which the two editions translated by Yang Xianyi and his wife and British Sinologist David Hawkes are the most complete and influential, and are deeply loved by people. Mr. Yang Xianyi has developed a strong interest in traditional Chinese culture and his artistic views, which are influenced by the artistic atmosphere of his family. His wife, Ms. Danielle, is a British national who has loved Chinese culture since childhood and has a deep understanding of the value of Chinese culture. On the contrary, Sinologist Hawkes was born in England, so English culture plays a dominant role. On the whole, Yang's translated texts are faithful and retain a large number of traditional Chinese cultural elements, reflecting the strategy of alienation. On the contrary, Hawkes's translation reflects the domestication strategy, taking the psychological expectations of target readers as the wind guide, replacing most of the social and cultural images in the original work, and enhancing the readability and fluency of the translation.

4.2. Translation Analysis of Dream of Red Mansions

Case I

Source Text: Zuo Ye Zhu Lou Meng, Jin Xiao Shui Guo Yin[7].

Dai Yang: Last night I dreamed in a vermilion mansion;
Tonight my songs rise by the sea.

Hawkes: Last night I dreamed I dwelt in marble halls;
Tonight beside the water waste I sing.

In traditional Chinese culture, "Zhu Lou" refers to a tall building surrounded by red walls. Red symbolizes solemnness and sanctity, and is usually the sign of a powerful family and aristocrat. In ancient poetry, the word "Zhu Lou" is also commonly used to allude to women's boudoir, sometimes representing the daughter of the rich and noble. Therefore, this image mainly includes the red wall, the mansion and the daughter of the noble family. In the process of translation, the alienation strategy adopted by Yang Xianyi and Dai Naidier, that is, the preservation of the original cultural image in the source text, is out of respect and protection for the source culture. They believe that these specific cultural images carry rich historical and emotional connotations and are important parts that cannot be ignored. By retaining these

images, they hope to convey richer and more authentic cultural information to the readers of the target language, so that the translation has more charm and charm of the original text. On the contrary, Hawkes adopted domestication strategy when translating Chinese ancient poetry into English poetry. For example, he transformed the "Zhu Lou" into the "marble hall". In English culture, the marble hall gives people a sense of grandeur, representing the noble family, but it does not directly refer to the noble noble lady. Hawkes' domestication strategy aims at seeking translation.

Case II

Source Text: Ke Tan Zhe, Qing Deng Gu Dian Ren Jiang Lao;
Gu Fu Le, Hong Fen Zhu Lou Chun Se Lan!

Dai Yang: By the dim light of an old shrine, she will fade away,
Her powder and red chamber, her youth and beauty wasted.

Hawkes: Sad it seemed that your life should in dim-lit shrine be wasted,
All the sweets of spring untasted.

"Hong Fen Zhu Lou" is a common Chinese idiom, usually used to describe the life scene of a rich and noble family or a beautiful young woman. Among them, "red pink" refers to a woman's makeup, and can also refer to a young and beautiful woman; "Zhu Lou" refers to a luxurious mansion or palace. The whole idiom means the life scene of a rich and noble family or a young and beautiful woman. It often appears in ancient poems and literary works to depict a magnificent scene or a beautiful and touching woman. When expressing the part of the message that the woman's youth has passed away and her face is no longer there, Yang Xianyi and Dai Naidie retain these two images, which are consistent with the information of the source text. Therefore, for the target audience, its expression is full of exotic, and the elegance of traditional Chinese culture is further highlighted. Hawkes uses analogy. Spring - energetic and full of energy. However, strictly speaking, the word "spring" and "red pink and Zhu Lou" do not exactly correspond, but generally speaking, it also conveys the main idea of the poem to the target readers, which is an effective way.

Case III

Source text: Jia Ji Sui Ji, Jia Gou Sui Gou.

Dai Yang: Marry a cock and follow a cock; marry a dog and follow a dog.

Hawkes: When rooster crows at the break of day, all his hen-folk must obey.
No choice for a dog's wife but to make the best of dog's life.

"Jia Ji Sui Ji, Jia Gou Sui Gou" means that a married woman should try to get along with her husband. This proverb comes from the ancient farming culture of China, where the words "dog" and "chicken" appear frequently in literature and colloquial language. It is also used in literary works such as *Journey to the West*. However, the frequency of these two images in English context is relatively low, and they are not used as images, and they do not have specific social and cultural connotations. In Yang Dai's translation, the principle of fidelity is adhered to and the method of word-by-word translation is adopted. However, this strategy has drawbacks. Considering that the target readers lack a deep accumulation and understanding of the cultural environment of the source language, they may not be able to capture the specific meaning to be conveyed by the corresponding images, and there may be dyslexia in the reading process. In this case, it brings a bad reading experience to the readers, so the readers may feel that the translator is not high level, and the translation of the target text is just a pile of gorgeous words. In Hawkes's translation, the domestication strategy is adopted to translate traditional Chinese cultural images into English poetic patterns familiar to the target readers, and the meanings of the source text are well known to the target readers.

5. Conclusion

Sociality is one of the main characteristics of translation activities, so factors outside the text will inevitably have an impact on it, which mainly involve social ideology, cultural context, etc. Translators will be passively restrained by these factors, and at the same time, they will reasonably exert their own subjective initiative to a certain extent. Therefore, in the process of translation, translators should not only consider the influence of political, cultural, economic and other factors outside the text, but also make overall consideration from the perspective of the original author and the target reader, which is not an easy task. On the basis of overall consideration of various factors, the translator of the novel *A Dream of Red Mansions* gave full play to his own subjective initiative and adhered to the principle of the translator's subjectivity. Finally, he successfully found a compromise solution and conveyed the original information completely and accurately, which played an extremely important role in the external communication of Chinese culture. This enables foreign readers to have a further detailed and accurate understanding and comprehension of Chinese literature. As a model in translation, *A Dream of Red Mansions* is worth our continuous exploration and reference. Today, it is more and more important to promote Chinese culture to go global and enhance the soft power of Chinese culture, and the heavy responsibility of spreading Chinese culture falls on everyone's shoulders. I hope this article can provide some inspiration and inspiration for Chinese and foreign translators who are committed to promoting Chinese culture to go abroad through literary translation. Together, we can help Chinese culture go abroad.

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