

On the English Translation of Culture-loaded Words in Red Literary Classics Based on Cognitive Translatology Studies

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Abstract

Culture-loaded words are words, phrases, and idioms that refer to things unique to a certain culture, and these words reflect the unique ways of activities of a particular nation that have been gradually accumulated in the course of a long history and that are different from those of other nations (Liao Qiyi, 2000). Red classic literature, as a part of Chinese excellent culture, carries the gene of the red spirit, and it is of great significance to research the English translation of culture-loaded words in red classic novels for the inheritance and dissemination of the red spirit. Under the theoretical framework of cognitive parsing mechanism in cognitive translation, this study takes the two red classic novels, *Red Crag* and *Builders of a New Life*, as the research texts, studies the culture-loaded words in them, explores the English translation strategies of culture-loaded words in the red literary classics, summarizes the translation patterns of the culture-loaded words, and investigates the motives for the generation of their patterns. We also summarize the translation patterns of culture-loaded words and explore the motivation of their patterns. It is found that the translators skillfully combine the two translation strategies of naturalization and alienation when translating the culture-loaded words in the red literary classics. To realize the intentional penetration of the original language culture into the target language culture, the translators mostly adopt the combination of free and direct translations, and they also adopt the cultural filtering and purification method to downplay the words that are not conducive to the image of the new China and adopt the revolutionary narrative mode of setting up an ideal image of the new Chinese society and safeguarding the struggle for the democratic revolution in China. It adopts a revolutionary narrative mode to establish the ideal national image of China's new society and to defend the struggle of China's democratic revolution. The emergence of this mode of translation is not only related to the translator's special cultural identity as an American-Chinese and his experience in China but also to the subjectivity of the translator and his basic starting point of focusing on the humanistic spirit in the translation process.

Keywords

Cognitive Translatology studies; Red literature; Culture-loaded words; English translation.

1. INTRODUCTION

Language is the carrier of culture, and language can reflect a nation's philosophical thinking, social culture, religious beliefs, customs, and habits. When translating a text, the translator deals with individual words, but he is dealing with two big pieces of culture. Culture is deeply rooted in language, and every language contains a large number of culture-loaded words, so the study of culture-loaded words is crucial. As a part of China's excellent culture, red classic literature has red characteristics that distinguish it from other literary works, and the study of red

literature is conducive to the promotion of Chinese culture, enhancement of cultural soft power, and the promotion of Chinese culture to go global. In Cognitive Translatology Studies, Xu Wen and Kairong Xiao (2019) proposed that translation is a cognitive process and pointed out the route of translation research: stipulation → description → interpretation, i.e., how it should be translated → how the translation is actually like → why it should be translated that way. From this, it can be seen that the study of culture-loaded words should not only summarize the laws of translation but also make a regular summary of the changes in the translator's thinking during the translation process. Given this, this study will use a new paradigm of translation science--Cognitive Translatology to study the translator's translation process, and take the "mechanism of knowledge and understanding" in Cognitive Translatology as the theoretical framework, to reveal the essence and law of translation, and to point out the reasons for the translator's translation mode. It also points out the reasons for the emergence of the translator's translation mode.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND INTRODUCTION TO THE TEXT

Cognitive Translatology is an emerging fringe discipline that closely integrates "cognitive science and cognitive linguistics" with "translation", fully reflecting the spirit of experience and humanism in postmodern philosophy. The core principle of CL is "Reality, Cognition and Language", which holds that language is formed based on people's "interactive experience" and "cognitive processing" of the real world. If this core principle is used to explain literary works, it is the creative principle of "literature comes from life and is above life" that China has always advocated. To say that literature originates from life reflects the interactive experience of real life, while to say that it is "above life" highlights the refining process of the human subject. To achieve this, it is necessary to respect the original text, based on "direct translation and alienation", and take into account the subjectivity of the translator, taking into account the method of "Naturalization and alienation". The combination of subject-object-subject, the deconstruction of "text-centrism" and the subversion of "translator-centrism" based on the humanistic view of experience, both of which can complement each other, is the basic starting point of cognitive translation. One of the core disciplinary frameworks of Cognitive Translatology involves a major way of human cognition, "literacy", that is, "people can understand the same scene in different ways", which mainly includes the elements of detail, domain, background, perspective, highlighting, and so on. This is mainly used to explain why people have different ways of understanding the same scene when confronted with it. This study argues that this mechanism can not only be used to analyze linguistic expressions, but more importantly, it proposes a feasible analytical solution for explaining human subjectivity, and it is also applicable to the study of the cognitive process of translation. Therefore, this study will apply this cognitive approach to analyze the English translation strategies, translation patterns, and their generative motives of the two classic novels, *Red Crag* and *Builders of a New Life*.

Red Crag is based on the underground struggle on the eve of the liberation of Chongqing, and is adapted from historical reality. The novel has historical authenticity and is a traditional work of the Chinese revolution that has been accumulated through continuous processing. There are a lot of poems interspersed in *Red Crag*, and a large number of couplets, and jingles can be said to be one of the major features of the novel *Red Crag*, which are mainly concentrated in the ninth to fifteenth chapters of the work, such as the famous "My Confession" and "Prisoner's Song". This extensive interspersion of poetry is both a true record of history and based on the need for creative expression. To express their revolutionary enthusiasm and boost their morale, the revolutionaries organized the "Poetry Society of the Iron Window" to express their revolutionary enthusiasm and boost their morale in the darkness of their imprisoned life. The poems are the practical reflections of the revolutionaries' fighting life. The novel draws on the

techniques of classical novels, quoting the poems directly or adapting them, which not only helps to portray the image of the heroes but also facilitates the public's understanding and acceptance. Since its publication in 1961, the novel *Red Crag* has not only been popular with domestic readers but has also been sold overseas, causing great repercussions.

Builders of a New Life selects the most significant historical event at the early stage of the establishment of the People's Republic of China, the agricultural cooperative movement, as the object of writing, and restores the depth of this significant historical event through the portrayal of different types of typical characters, and shows the complexity of the rural society of that time as much as possible with the help of the perspectives of various forces, and based on this, indicates the difficult process in the agricultural cooperative movement, and then unrolls the truth that socialism will win. The book is based on the difficult process of the agricultural cooperative movement and shows the truth that socialism is bound to win. The ability to focus on the historical landscape and the transformation of the peasants' thoughts and feelings at the time of the socialist transformation of Chinese agriculture demonstrates the power to summarize a great deal of social history and real life. At the same time, what is more significant is that the author puts the cooperative agricultural movement in the long history of China and writes out the inevitable trend of historical evolution, which is undoubtedly a work of epic proportions. In addition, the work consciously undertakes the literary mission of reflecting on the agrarian transformation, promoting collectivism, and celebrating heroism.

3. ANALYSIS OF EXAMPLES

As we know, translation is mainly about understanding and translating various meanings, so the theory of translation can also be fully borrowed from "experience" and "construal", the former can be used to explain the objectivity of translation, and the latter can be used to explain the subjectivity of translation. "Construal" refers to people's ability to recognize the same state of affairs in different ways, specifically, it refers to people's cognitive ability to observe the state of affairs and interpret the scene by identifying different domains, choosing different perspectives, highlighting different focuses, and weighing different degrees of sophistication, and it is a necessary way to form conceptual systems, semantic structures, and linguistic expressions. The above four aspects of the cognitive parsing mechanism, namely, scope, background, perspective, highlighting, and degree of detail, can serve as a theoretical framework for our study, which will be discussed in the following section in relation to the English translations of *Red Crag* and *Builders of a New Life* by Mr. Shapiro.

3.1. Scope and background

Example1:

Original: 他沉着地转过几条街，确信身后没有盯梢的尾巴，便向大川银行5号宿舍径直走去。

Translations: He made a deliberate detour through several streets, and when he was sure that he was not being followed headed straight for the lodgings for employees of the Tachuan Bank. He made a deliberate detour through several streets, and when he was sure that he was not being followed headed straight for the lodgings for employees of the Tachuan Bank.

Understanding and Reproducing Reconstruction: Before translating these words, the translator must first understand what they mean. In the original text, the phrase “盯梢的尾巴” refers to the spies who follow him. The setting of *Red Crag* is on the eve of liberation, and Chongqing, under the rule of the Kuomintang, is in the darkest moment before the dawn, so the novel's character, Yu Xinjiang, spies stalking him on the street all the time. Here Shapiro translates “身后没有盯梢的尾巴” as "he was not being followed". It is easy to see that the translator has some understanding of the background of the time and has adopted the strategy

of naturalization, which is relatively successful in unlocking the background knowledge of the word. The translator has unlocked the background knowledge and conceptual domain of the word.

3.2. Perspectives

Example2:

Original: 谁想到, 这一次来, 学校已经闹得热火朝天了。

Translations: Nevertheless, he was amazed to see that matters had already reached such a pitch at the university.

Reconstruction of literacy: Everyone sees things from different perspectives. Since Shapiro Luo Guangbin and Yang Yiyang are in different linguistic environments and at different times, they choose different perspectives when describing the same scene or the same thing, which is reflected in different forms of linguistic expressions in translation. Chinese belongs to the Sino-Tibetan language family while English belongs to the Indo-European language family, so there are big differences in language usage between the two. For example, Chinese has many four-character idioms, hiatus, and sayings. Since it is difficult to find the exact counterparts of these four-letter idioms in English, the translator needs to understand the linguistic environment and background of the Chinese language. Switching perspectives is also common in translation, mainly in the choice of translation strategies and techniques. The Chinese idiom "热火朝天" is a typical Chinese four-letter word that describes a mass movement or work that has reached a high level of enthusiasm, like a blazing fire blazing towards the sky. The subject of the original article is "school", which describes the protests inside the school as being in full swing. Unlike the original author's choice of perspective, Mr. Shapiro has shifted his viewpoint, taking "matters" as the subject and translating "学校已经闹得热火朝天" as "matters had already reached such a pitch at the university", i.e. what happened in the school had reached a critical juncture. Based on fully understanding and respecting the original text, and to preserve the culture of the source language as well as to make the translation more acceptable to the target language readers, the translator adopts the translation strategy of paraphrasing/naturalization to deal with this four-letter idiom.

3.3. Highlighting

Example3.

Original: 既完成联络站的任务, 又秘密地卖进步书刊。

Translations: We shall be a liaison post and at the same time secretly sell progressive books and publications.

Reconstruction of literacy reproduction: the progressive books and publications in the original text refer to the revolutionary books and publications under the rule of the Beiyang government before the liberation and tend to be progressive and revolutionary, and the translator directly translates them as "progressive books and publications", which highlights the progressiveness of the progressive books and publications and hides their revolutionary nature, and only activates the superficial linguistic domain of the translator's readers. The translator's direct translation of "progressive books and publications" highlights the progressive nature of progressive books and publications and hides their revolutionary nature.

3.4. The degree of detail

Example4:

Original: 还厚着脸皮声明什么: “本部并无干涉校政之初衷.....”真是此地无银三百两! 活见鬼!

Translations: They even had the cheek to declare 'We have not the slightest intention of interfering in university affairs...' The hell they haven't! ' The hell they haven't!

Reconstruction of knowledge and understanding: Highlighting and elaboration are two closely related ways of understanding, which can focus on a certain part and observe and discuss it in detail, or ignore some other parts and only describe them lightly, so that people recognize or describe a matter with different degrees of elaboration, and this phenomenon may appear in all levels of language. This phenomenon may occur at all levels of language. In the process of translating a poem, this situation is reflected in the translator's addition or deletion of the relevant information in the original work. The translator translates "活见鬼" as "The hell they haven't", which is more successful in showing Chengyao's indignation towards the practice of the Police Command in the original text, and it is closer to the original text's understanding. In addition, the translator has directly deleted "此地无银三百两" from the original text, and the author believes that more work is needed to deal with the degree of detail in this case.

4. CONCLUSION

Taking the " cognitive parsing mechanism " as the theoretical starting point, the author analyzes the process of cognitive reproduction and cognitive reconstruction of Shapiro's translation of culture-loaded words in *Red Crag* and *Builders of a New Life* and finds that the translator skillfully combines the two translation strategies of naturalization and alienation in translating culture-loaded words in the classics of red literature, and adopts a combination of free and direct translation to help establish the image of China's ideal country in the new society.

Chinese-American status and love of China have given Shapiro an in-depth knowledge of Chinese culture, so his understanding and reconstruction of most of the culture-loaded words are relatively accurate, but due to the big differences between Chinese and Western languages and cultures, Mr. Shapiro's understanding and reconstruction of some culture-loaded words are still to be scrutinized. In the author's opinion, only by fully exploring the cultural connotations of Chinese culture-loaded words can the translator succeed in recognizing and reproducing the original intention of the original author in the process of comprehending the original text, and only when the translator completes these two steps of the translation activity can he or she get an accurate translation. In a word, translators should try their best to preserve the cultural connotation of Chinese culture-loaded words through the four dimensions of literacy, so that our literary works and the culture they contain can be better disseminated and exchanged with the outside world.

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