

Study on Translation Strategies of Metaphor in Zhang Peiji's *Elected Modern Chinese Essays* From the Cultural Perspective

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Many literary essays contain a large number of metaphor examples. Due to the differences between language and culture, metaphor, as a carrier of culture, makes many translators rack their brains and make great efforts in translation. In recent years, scholars' research on metaphor also emerges many new ideas. On the basis of previous metaphor studies, this paper discusses the cultural factors in conceptual metaphor, selects the translation of some metaphors in Zhang Peiji's *Selected Modern Chinese Essays* as examples, and focuses on three strategies of metaphor translation: Literal translation retains the metaphor in the original language; free translation refers to the transformation of metaphor guided by the target language culture; literal translation of cultural metaphor and increase connotation interpretation.

Keywords: *Selected Modern Chinese Essays*, culture, metaphor, translation strategies

It is exceedingly common and popular among people to use metaphor in their daily communication. The study of metaphor stranded in the lexical and rhetoric level for a long time. An increasing number of scholars spend much time to study metaphor from a different perspective. Later, Lakoff and Johson (1980) published a book named *Metaphors We Live by*, which first proposed cognitive metaphor and gained great response. There are many metaphorical cases in Chinese literary essays. For example, *Elected Modern Chinese Essays* by Zhang Peiji (2007) contains many excellent essays which abounded with various metaphors published by some famous author during the May 4th Movement. Metaphor and culture cannot be divided. Owing to that the different languages and cultures will form different thinking frame, the understanding of conceptual metaphor also meets cultural obstacles when proceed cultural exchange. Particularly when some texts need to be translated, it is a difficult problem in translation process to maintain the cultural connotation and convey the meaning of the original text at the same time.

The Definition of Metaphor

Metaphor is an abstract concept, which revealed the same characteristics between different objects. It consists of three parts: external object which exists in the real world, image which has the similar relationships with the objects, and sense which has the common semantic area between the object and image. Object is a concrete concept in the source domain, such as a substance, "table", which is a specific object. In "Table can stand stably with four legs", "legs" is "image". Because the four pillars supporting the table are similar to the four legs of animals, the common semantic area is "can keep stable". Therefore, the pillars of the table are

compared to legs, and the sense is “Stand stably”.

Cultural Obstacles in Metaphor

Metaphor is deeply rooted in social life and carries abundant cultural metaphor images. Due to the discrepancy between different cultures, people’s experience under each culture is also diverse, so there are disparities in the way of understanding the same concept. For example, “bamboo” is rare in the UK. The cultural connotation of “竹子” in Chinese and “bamboo shoots” in English is not quite equal. If “雨后春笋” is translated into “like bamboo shoots after a spring rain”, it could not appear a vibrant and prosperous scene in the minds of British and American people. For example, literal translation will eventually contribute to the lack of cultural meaning. The way to deal with such problems is to find another image in the target language that can arouse the same response of readers. Therefore, in the above example, “春笋” can be translated into “mushrooms” in English. Because the word “mushroom” in English is equal to “春笋” in Chinese from the perspective culture, they all grow rapidly after the rain. The reader can give a positive response despite changing its image. “Fish” often contains the derogatory sense, such as “a loose fish” which is used to refer to a woman who is dissolute and obscene, while “fish” in china is often adopted to express the hopeful dream that people look forward to rich life and bright future. This phenomenon of inconsistency cultural images has a great impact on the understanding of metaphor. In the process of metaphor translation, when facing the metaphor with cultural connotation, the translator should first have good command of the two different cultures involved in metaphor, and then evaluate the cognitive level of the target readers, so as to strive to cross the cultural obstacles in metaphor and realize the transmission of cultural information.

Translation Strategies of Conceptual Metaphor

Metaphor is ubiquitous in our life, which means that metaphor translation must realize the transformation of metaphor connotation and form.

Cultural Limitations on Metaphor Translation

Translation is cultural exchange between two different countries. If culture is the body, language is the most important part of the body. Only the integration of the two can maintain the vitality. It can be seen that language, culture, and translation are integrated and indivisible. The cultural limitation of metaphor translation, that is, the inconsistency between the vehicles and connotation involved in conceptual metaphor between the two cultures, so cultural factors will affect the translator’s understanding and choice. For example, different cultures have different referential ranges and ideological bases in metaphorical association. In Chinese language and culture, red usually represents revolution and auspiciousness, resulting in expressions such as “红色文化”, “红色根据地”, and “红军”, “红联”. While in foreign culture, red often represents anger and danger, such as “be in red”, “a red rag to a ball”. In addition, different cultures have different value standards for the images involved in metaphor. For example, “龙” called “dragon” in English. “Dragon” is regarded as propitious symbol of the China, representing strength and victory. It is usually used as compliment, for example, “望子成龙”, which means “the parents hope their children can become dragon one day, because to be dragon means their son can receive success” and “龙凤呈祥” which means that dragon can bring happiness, and so on. In English, “dragon” represents a fierce and cruel animal; it usually contains the derogatory meaning. Therefore, the objects involved in metaphor have different cultural characteristics and cultural connotations.

Translation Strategies of Metaphors

Metaphor translation is a thorny problem when it involves cultural obstacles. The following is a discussion on how to accurately convey the cultural images and connotative meanings in metaphor translation based on the examples in Zhang Peiji's *Elected Modern Chinese Essays*.

Literal translation (retaining the metaphorical image in the source language). According to the common experience of human life, people in different cultural situations have many similarities in their perception of image. In the process of metaphor translation, when the cognitive mode of the two languages is the same and the language form is unified, the literal translation method can be adopted to retain the image and connotation of the metaphor in the source language, and entirely repeat the language information in the metaphor in the translation process. The example is as follows.

生活本身就是一个悲剧。（巴金，《激流》总序）
Life itself is a tragedy. (Zhang, 2007, p. 86)

Since most people of Chinese and English cultures have similar perceptions of the world, some Chinese metaphors also have the same meaning and usage in English, and correspond in terms of word meaning and cultural images. In Chinese and English cultures, there are usually similar metaphors to describe the same abstract things. For example, people in Chinese and English cultures will use the concrete object of “tragedy” to describe the abstract image of “life”, and cross the source domain of “tragedy” and the target domain of “life” to form a mapping. In translating process, because the cognitive mechanisms of the two cultures are similar and have the same image and associative meaning, literal translation is usually used in this kind translation to keep the cultural connotation of the metaphor.

Free translation (transferring metaphorical image parallelly). The universality of conceptual metaphor means that there are similarities in human cognitive models. The two different cultures have the same conceptual metaphor for the same thing, but there are disparities in the image of metaphor. In translation, we could not copy the cognitive mode of the source language, that is, we cannot move the metaphorical image into the target language invariably, but have to convert the metaphor in the original text into the target language culture according to the cognitive thinking mode of the target language. Following is the example in Zhang Peiji's *Elected Modern Chinese Essays*.

往往迷于局部而不能顾及全体。（丰子凯，《渐》）
They often see the trees, but not the wood. (Zhang, 2007, p. 153)

In the original text, the word “局部” means “part” which comes from Lu Xun's “Dawn Blossoms Plucked at Dusk”: “Mr. Fujino's class is dissection practice and dissection of part of the body” (Lu, 1979, pp. 198-214). In the original meaning of “局部” it refers to a part of the body, which was later used to describe the nuances of things. The “全体” means “whole” which originally refers to the whole body. Now it is used to refer the whole of things. In the English translation of this example, the translator chose the two metaphors of “tree and branch” in the target language to replace it. This is because there are different cognitive views in Chinese and English cultures. In the two different cultures, English emphasizes “nature” and more “objects”, while Chinese emphasizes “harmony between man and nature” and more emphasizes “man”. The inconsistency of metaphor images in different cultures is a big impediment in metaphor. A good metaphor translation involves the thinking process of two different cultures. Therefore, when dealing with this kind of metaphor, the translator is

required to be familiar with the discrepancies of culture and customs between the two countries and have higher requirements for the translator's level.

Literal translation of conceptual metaphors and adding interpretation of the cultural connotation.

In the process of metaphor translation, if conceptual metaphor is directly translated, the metaphor image not appeared in the target language culture, the target language readers will not understand this metaphor image because they have no corresponding cultural background information in their thinking; if the meaning of the metaphor is translated freely, the metaphor's cultural connotation of the source language will be missing in the translation, and the target language readers could not understand and appreciate the cultural connotation of the source language.

In this case, in order to preserve the cultural metaphor of the source language and convey the abundant cultural connotation, we can learn from the structure of Chinese allegorical sayings and divide the metaphor with special cultural connotation into two parts, namely, "literal translation" of the metaphor plus "interpretation" of cultural connotation. (Liu, 2008, p. 296)

This interpretation is not equivalent to free translation, but a suggestive translation. In such a translation method, the first part of the translation of the source language metaphor comes from the original text, and the latter part of "interpretation" is the implied prompt given by the translator according to the context and cultural background knowledge of the original text. It is the additional cultural connotation information, and this part of information just enables the target reader to fully understand the literal translation of the original metaphor. It is not difficult to see that this innovative translation method solves the problem of cultural loss in translation to a great extent. For example,

有无数的人面杜鹃被人哺育着。(郭沫洛,《杜鹃》)

Numerous cuckoo-like men sponging off their compatriot. (Zhang, 2007, p. 221)

“无数的人面杜鹃” in the source language is translated into “cuckoo like man”, followed by “people who depend on their compatriots”. Because people abroad do not know the cuckoo often exchanges other bird's eggs on the sneak so she could not raise her children. Chinese people prefer to compare people who are not independent and dependent on others to cuckoos. Therefore, when translating “cuckoo”, we need to explain its cultural connotation “sponging off their compatriot” to make up for the loss implication of other countries' people.

Conclusion

Both English and Chinese metaphors have the function of enriching language content and contextual effect. Metaphor is widely used in daily life and language communication. It is necessary to understand the essence of metaphor and explore its translation strategies. Due to the disparity of different nationalities' thinking, cognition, and culture, the translation of metaphor should be skillful and flexible. Rich cultural connotation carried by metaphor. Cultural factors control metaphor translation, so it is difficult to retain the metaphor image and convey the cultural connotation. Therefore, we should adopt different translation strategies for different cultural counterparts, and create new translation methods to solve the problem of cultural image loss in the study of metaphor translation. The purpose of translation is to first enable the reader to understand the content of the text, and then made the reader understand all aspects of foreign countries through the translation. Therefore, the translator's task is to deeply understand the cultural disparities between the two countries, so as

to create a proper translation and act as messengers of civilization. It will also help translators better to start their work, accurately convey the cultures of the two countries, and promote cultural communication between the two countries.

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