

The Enlightenment of Lin Shu's Translation Model on the Cultivation of Post Editing Ability

ZHANG Zhongkai

University of Shanghai for Science and Technology, Shanghai, China

As is well known, Lin Shu is one of the most famous translators in modern times and enjoys the reputation of being a "leading figure in the translation industry". This article will analyze the reasons for Lin Shu and his brilliant achievements in translating novels from the perspective of the "Lin Shu Plus His Friends" translation model. Then, based on the prevalence of machine translation in the new era, this paper explores the important abilities and qualities that post editors should possess by summarizing Lin Shu's successful experience. This paper aims to encourage translators to value their target language abilities, discourse abilities, and enhance their reader awareness.

Keywords: Lin Shu, post editing, target language abilities, discourse ability, reader awareness

Introduction

Lin Shu is one of the most outstanding translators in modern China, and he has translated countless works in his half-life, making him a great master of a generation. According to research on his translation, we can find that Lin Shu's success is not accidental. It comes from his unique translation model. So, what inspirations does the success of this translation model have for post editors in this era?

With the continuous increase in work intensity, post editors nowadays face more and more challenges. At the same time, this also puts higher demands on their abilities. The author believes that many outstanding advantages of Lin Shu's translation model have great value for the cultivation of contemporary post editors. Therefore, this article will explore the implications of Lin Shu's translation model for contemporary post editors based on Lin's translation research. It should be pointed out that the focus of this article is not on the evaluation of Lin Shu and Lin's translated novels, but on summarizing the excellent aspects of Lin's translation model that are worth learning from by contemporary post editors.

Analysis of the Translation Mode of "Lin Shu Plus His Friends"

As we all know, Lin Shu has no understanding of foreign languages, and all of his translations are completed in collaboration with his friends who are proficient in foreign languages. The most representative among them are Wang Shouchang, Wei Yi, and others.

From Jacobson's (2004) classification of translation, the "Lin Shu Plus His Friends" translation model actually includes friends' "Interlingual Translation" and Lin Shu's "Intralingual Translation". The translation practice of "reciting Western and translating into Chinese" by friends belongs to interlingual translation, where

two languages communicate their meanings in a cross linguistic context, using meaning as a benchmark and communication as the purpose of language symbol conversion. Lin Shu's written language, which transforms spoken language into classical Chinese, is a kind of language mode conversion within language signs, which belongs to intralingual translation. Throughout the entire translation process, friends are responsible for selecting the original work, converting foreign languages to Chinese (oral form), and providing necessary explanations and discussions during the translation process to compensate for Lin Shu's lack of relevant knowledge. Lin Shu is responsible for converting spoken language into written language (classical Chinese). During this process, Lin utilized his solid foundation in classical Chinese and profound cultural accumulation in the target language to make the translation more in line with the preferences of Chinese readers in terms of expression and culture.

Song Minghua and Lin Benchun mentioned:

The "Lin Shu Plus His Friends" translation model is the product of a special era, and it was an accidental attempt when foreign language talents were scarce. Now there are many foreign language talents, and few people can write in classical Chinese, so this model should not appear again. (2003, p. 57)

However, the author believes that this translation model can completely benchmark the popular "machine translation and post editing" model. The former is to convert foreign written language into Chinese spoken language (friends), and then convert Chinese spoken language into Chinese written language (Lin Shu). The latter is to convert the foreign written language to the hard Chinese written language (machine), and then convert the hard Chinese written language to the reasonable Chinese written language (editor). In both models, the first step of conversion occurs between different languages, which is equivalent to interlingual translation. The second step of conversion occurs within the same language, with the difference being that the former focuses on translation (vernacular classical Chinese) and the latter on editing. Therefore, the author believes that we can analyze the advantages of the "Lin Shu Plus His Friends" translation model, and use it in the "machine translation and post editing" model, so as to help today's editors improve translation work.

The Enlightenment of the "Lin Shu Plus His Friends" Translation Mode on the Cultivation of Post Editing Ability

Here, the author will summarize the existing framework of post editing abilities and make appropriate adjustments to the existing mainstream framework based on the actual work needs of post editors, in order to summarize a relatively reasonable framework of abilities. On this basis, the author will deeply analyze the various advantages of the "Lin Shu Plus His Friends" model and benchmark the current "machine translation and post editing" model, so as to dig out the parts of the former that are worth learning for editors.

Post Editing Ability Framework

At present, the research on post editing ability in the academic community is still in the development stage, and there has not yet been a systematic and universally accepted framework for post editing ability. Comparatively speaking, the framework that is highly recognized by the academic community at present includes the following: O'Brien (2002) believed that in addition to some recognized abilities (such as the ability to use source and target languages, professional domain knowledge, tool application ability, etc.), excellent post editors also need to master machine translation knowledge, terminology management skills, pre-editing/controlled language skills, basic programming skills, and discourse linguistics skills. Besides, they are also able to use macro commands to compile dictionaries for machine translation, and have a positive attitude towards machine

translation output. Rico and Torrejón (2012) believed that post editing needs three major categories of competence, namely, language competence, tool competence, and core competence, among which language competence includes communication and discourse competence in at least two languages, cultural and cross-cultural competence, subject domain knowledge (competence); tool competence includes terminology management, dictionary maintenance, basic programming competence, and machine translation knowledge (including tolerance and positive attitude towards machine translated texts); and core competence includes attitude or physiological/psychological abilities, and strategic abilities. It should be noted that attitude or physiological/psychological abilities mainly include the handling of subjectivity issues in the post editing process, such as formulating and applying post editing rules, fully meeting customer expectations, overcoming uncertainty, and tolerating low-quality translations. Strategic abilities mainly involve precise decision-making on the degree of post editing, strict adherence to post editing instructions, and decisive abandonment of style issues (even in the face of low-quality machine translation output).

Among all the abilities listed above, the author believes that some of them are too complex, such as most of the tool related abilities and a small amount of team operation abilities. These abilities are not so much translator skills as technical and operational abilities. After summarizing and screening the various abilities listed above, the author divides the post editing ability into two major dimensions, namely basic skills and extensive skills. Among them, basic skills include: source and target language ability, professional knowledge, discourse ability, cultural ability, information retrieval and editing ability, and translation theoretical knowledge. Extensive skills can be further divided into tool and professional cultivation abilities. The former includes: pre editing ability, terminology management ability, and translation tool application ability. The later includes: clarifying customer needs, following post editing rules, grasping the degree of post editing, and tolerating low-quality translations. Next, the author will deeply analyze the core competencies in the "Lin Shu Plus His Friends" model based on the above competency framework.

Analysis of Lin Shu's Ability

In the author's opinion, although Lin's translated novels have their unique historical background, their success, especially for a long time after Lin Shu's death, has maintained strong vitality and is closely related to the unique advantages of this special translation model itself. From Lin Shu's perspective, outstanding target language ability is an important reason for the success of this model. There is a portrait description of the female protagonist Mark in "The Legacy of the Paris Camellia Woman": "马克长身玉立，御长裙，仙仙然描画不能肖，虽欲故状其丑，亦莫知为辞，修眉媚眼，脸犹朝霞，发黑如漆覆额，而仰盘于顶上，结为巨髻". In the source text, this description has hundreds of words, and Lin Shu deleted the lengthy and cumbersome descriptions during the translation. He used refined ink that is more in line with Chinese reading habits to depict Mark vividly, without losing the charm of the original text. This reflects Lin Shu's strong ability in target language.

In addition, Lin Shu's translation also demonstrates his excellent discourse ability. On the premise of not losing the narrative characteristics and aesthetic charm of the novel itself, Lin's translated novels have completely subverted the traditional language concept of novels. He uses concise yet elegant classical Chinese to narrate long stories with winding plots, which has never been done in the history of ancient Chinese literature. This approach completely breaks the stereotypical impression of classical Chinese writing. These all demonstrate Lin Shu's excellent discourse ability.

Lin Shu's grasp of customer needs during the translation process is also very precise. Li Ning (2020) used Antoina Berman's translation ethics theory to attribute Lin Shu's free translation to reasonable behavior generated under the constraints of narrative ethics. He believes that a good translated work should conform to the language narrative habits (narrative ethics) of the target culture in order to achieve the purpose of dissemination. Yang Lihua (2013) believed that Lin Shu needs to be constrained by political goals and traditional ethics in the translation process, so he must choose works that meet the intention of "saving the nation from extinction". At the same time, he must consciously delete and modify parts that do not meet the ethical standards upheld by the Chinese people. Cheng Huaping (2007) directly attributed the great success of Lin Shu's translated works to his reader consciousness.

Lin Qinnan's reader awareness is reflected in the following aspects:

Firstly, the choice of works: Not all of Lin Shu's translated works are first-class works by literary masters such as Dickens and Shakespeare, but also include a large number of so-called "second-and third-class works" such as "The Opening of the Sherlock Case" and the Sherlock Holmes series of stories. Although these translations have been criticized for a long time, they reflect Lin Shu's reader awareness. Although the selection of works mainly relies on collaborators, Lin Shu also made his own voice in this process. He was well aware that detective and adventure novels were more attractive to readers at that time than many literary masterpieces, so he translated many popular works to cater to readers' preferences.

Secondly, the choice of culture: Lin Shu consciously adjusted the religious culture in the joint translation of "Black Slave's Heavenly Record" with Wei Yi. Lin Shu made significant deletions or de-religionization of the religious content that carried the dominant ideology of the original work, in order to cater to the cultural cognition of Chinese readers. In the original work, the author, from the perspective of the narrator, repeatedly expresses religious sentiments through his mouth, encouraging readers to always adhere to religious beliefs and always be grateful for the Lord. These contents clearly contradicted the religious cognition of the Chinese people at that time. Therefore, Lin Shu made significant deletions to the above content in his translation, thus satisfying the appetite of the Chinese people.

However, the "Lin Shu Plus His Friends" translation model also has other limitations. Lin Shu, due to his lack of professional knowledge in the process of translation and his insistence on the quality of the translation produced, made drastic modifications to the output of the interpreter in many places. This will also distort the original information to a certain extent.

Enlightenment

By incorporating the above analysis into the competency framework proposed by the author, we can find that the "Lin Shu Plus His Friends" model has outstanding strong abilities, especially in terms of target language ability, discourse ability, cultural ability (target language culture), and understanding of customer needs. These advantages are the key to Lin's great success. However, Lin Shu's weak abilities are also very obvious, which is the main reason why his works are still controversial today. For current post editors, Lin Shu's weak abilities will not truly become a problem. Because current editors have a certain source language foundation and technical reserves, and have a deeper understanding of machine translation mode, which makes it easier for them to get rid of the shackles of subjectivity. Therefore, issues related to the source language, source culture, and technical aspects will not truly become a problem for post editors. However, Lin Shu's strong abilities are what many editors lack. They, even relevant professional learners, seriously overlook the importance of target language and

discourse abilities, which makes them unable to cope with low-quality language in machine translation. In addition, many translators overlook customer needs, have weak reader awareness, and do not have a deep understanding of whom the translated text is for and what the purpose of translation is. On the contrary, they only blindly follow the words, terms, and sentences of the original text, without paying too much attention to whether such text can be easily understood by readers. In a sense, this type of translation is more like being enslaved by the author than serving the readers. Similarly, such translation habits are also difficult to apply in the “machine translation first” mode. The cultural factor is also closely related to the reader’s awareness. Only by clarifying the reader’s needs and deeply understanding the culture of the target readers can we truly produce translations that meet the reader’s appetite. Therefore, translators, especially post editors, should pay more attention to the cultivation of target language and discourse abilities on the basis of possessing necessary source language abilities. In addition, in the process of translating, they should make efforts to pay more attention to readers, respect the target language culture, and break free from the constraints of the original text. It should be noted that breaking free from the constraints of the original text does not mean abandoning the original text. More accurately, it does not mean abandoning the meaning and charm of the original text. Instead, the unique vocabulary habits and expressions of the source language should be discarded to achieve the goal of conveying meaning without conveying words. Taking English to Chinese translation as an example, after all, what translation needs to do is to translate English into “Chinese” rather than “Chinese characters”.

Conclusion

Translation is essentially not creation, but a means of communication. Its greatest significance lies in spreading information, value, and culture. In other words, if translation is compared to a truck, then the information it spreads is the goods. The premise for a truly effective transportation is that the goods have both sellers and buyers. That is to say, in order to truly unleash the value of translation, it is necessary to search for the most popular works among the target readers in existing works and present them in the way that the target readers like the most. Therefore, for a translator, reader awareness is crucial, as translation does not serve the author but the reader. Similarly, translation does not exist for the purpose of changing culture, but rather for the dissemination of culture. Changing culture should be the author’s intention, not the translator’s. Therefore, catering to the cultural habits of the target audience is crucial. Lin Shu’s success stems from his understanding of that era and its people. He knows what the era needs, what people need, and even who truly needs him. Today’s translators are also the same. They should not only adapt to the trend of the times and improve their own abilities, but also clarify the needs of the times and readers, and do their best to produce the text that readers need.

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