

A Study on the Metaphorical Translation of Pound's *Book of Songs* from the Perspective of Cognitive Linguistics

FENG Shi-yun, MA Wen-li
Wuhan University of Technology, Wuhan, China

The Book of Songs is the first collection of Poems in China, which is a very important milestone in the history of Chinese literature. There are abundant metaphorical expressions in *The Book of Songs*, providing valuable resources for linguistics, rhetoric and literature research. This study selects the most representative metaphors of women and marriage in *The Book of Songs* as the research object. Guided by Lakoff and Johnson's conceptual metaphor theory, this study explores the metaphorical translation in Pound's *Book of Songs* from the perspective of cognitive effect. It is found that Pound mainly adopts the translation strategies of vehicle equivalence, vehicle conversion and metaphor to simile in the process of translating female metaphors and marriage metaphors in *The Book of Songs*.

Key words: English translation of *The Book of Songs*, metaphor, metaphor translation, cognitive linguistics

Introduction

As the first collection of poems in the history of Chinese literature, *The Book of Songs* not only carries the origin of Chinese national culture, but also embodies the traditional Confucianism. There are approximately 116 poems about women and marriage and love in *The Book of Songs*, accounting for about one third. Among many English translations of *The Book of Songs*, Ezra Pound, the pioneer of American imagism, fully embodies the characteristics of "image presentation" in ancient Chinese poetry, and reproduces the aesthetic expectation and poetic creation of poetry translation with plain, concentrated language, high imagization and phonological beauty, which has unique literary and translation research value. Based on the conceptual metaphor theory of cognitive linguistics, this paper attempts to explore the translation strategies and cognitive effects of the female metaphors and marriage metaphors in Pound's English translation of *The Book of Songs*.

The English Translation of *The Book of Songs* and Its Overview

The Book of Songs has been translated into English for nearly 300 years. Up to now, there have been 10 complete English translations of *The Book of Songs* at home and abroad, and more than 10 abridged or selected translations. The world's first complete translation of *The Book of Songs* was James Legge's branch prose translation-*The She King* in 1871. Compared with the West, the translation of *The Book of Songs* started later in

China. In the 1990s, English translations of *The Book of Songs* by Xu Yuanchong, Wang Rongpei, Yang Xianyi and Yu Guanying were published. In recent years, domestic studies on the English translation of *The Book of Songs* have mainly focused on the translator's subjectivity in the translation process, corpus research, comparative research between different translators or translations, translation research based on intertextuality, manipulation theory and communication research. However, foreign researchers pay more attention to the combination of the English translation of *The Book of Songs* and its content study, mostly explore the relationship between metaphor and the English translation of Chinese classics from the perspective of hermeneutics or comparative study of the translations.

Metaphor and Metaphorical Translation

In the 1980s, Lakoff and Johnson proposed The Conceptual Metaphor Theory in *Metaphors We Live By*, so that the study of metaphor from the traditional rhetoric to the field of thinking. Lakoff and Johnson believe that metaphor is a kind of psychological mapping, which is a cross-domain mapping that maps the features of one conceptual domain (source domain) to another conceptual domain (target domain), so that the target domain can obtain some relevant features of source domain, and generates metaphorical meaning in the process of cross-domain mapping. In the process of metaphor translation, the conversion of source and target vehicles is also a process of "cross-domain mapping". If a "mapping equivalence" can be formed between the source domain in the target language and the source domain in the source language, so that the target language readers can acquire the same or similar cognition as the source language readers, and generating metaphorical expansion, and finally achieve the purpose of conceptual metaphorical transmission.

Female Metaphors and Marriage Metaphors in *The Book of Songs*

Female Metaphors

According to the author's statistics, there are about 80 poems describing female images from different angles in *The Book of Songs*. This part selects three typical metaphors from these 80 poems concerning the image of women:

Beauty as a flower:

《郑风·有女同车》 有女同车，颜如舜华。将翱将翔，佩玉琼琚。
《召南·何彼秣矣》 何彼秣矣？唐棣之华。何彼秣矣？华如桃李。

Beauty as a jade:

《魏风·汾沮洳》 彼其之子，美如玉。美如玉，殊异乎公族。
《召南·野有死麋》 林有朴楸，野有死麋。白茅纯束，有女如玉。

Beauty as a moon:

《大雅·韩奕》 诸娣从之，祁祁如云。韩侯顾之，烂其盈门。
《陈风·月出》 月出皎兮，佼人僚兮。月出皓兮，佼人僚兮。月出照兮，佼人僚兮。

Marriage Metaphors

Among the many themes involved in *The Book of Songs*, there are nearly 60 poems about love and marriage, accounting for a large proportion. This part selects three typical metaphors from these 60 poems concerning the image of marriage and love:

Running water is a metaphor for love:

《郑风·溱洧》溱与洧，方涣涣兮。士与女，方秉蒲兮。

《卫风·氓》淇水汤汤，渐车帷裳。女也不爽，士贰其行。

Birds are metaphors for love:

《周南·关雎》关关雎鸠，在河之洲；窈窕淑女，君子好逑。

《邶风·雄雉》雄雉于飞，泄泄其羽。我之怀矣，自诒伊阻！

Pairs of things are a metaphor for love:

《邶风·简兮》山有榛，隰有苓。云谁之思？西方美人。

《陈风·泽陂》彼泽之陂，有蒲与荷。有美一人，伤如之何？

A Cognitive Analysis of the Metaphor Translation in Pound's *Book of Songs*

Table 1

Translation Strategies of The Book of Songs

Proportion of three translation strategies in Pound's version	Metaphor equivalence	Metaphor conversion	Metaphor to simile
	50%	30%	20%

Metaphor Equivalence

Example (1)

《周南·汝坟》遵彼汝坟，伐其汝坟。未见君子，惄如调饥。

Pound's version: By the levees of Ju
I cut boughs in the brake,
not seeing milord
to ease heart-ache.

“汝” in the poem here means “water” and “坟” means “embankment”. Here “汝坟” is not only a metaphor for love between men and women, but also a symbol of the barrier and restraint of love. Here Pound completely retained the vehicle of the original poem and literally translated “汝坟” into “the levees of Ju”, which enriched the connotation of the poem by using the strategy of metaphor equivalence between the source domain and the target domain, so that the target readers have a similar cognitive process to that of the source language readers.

Metaphor Conversion

Example (2)

《邶风·简兮》山有榛，隰有苓。
云谁之思？西方美人。

Pound's version: Hazel on hill, mallow in mead,
West Country men for prettiness, who guessed?

The poem metaphorically expresses love by the Yin and Yang of “山与隰” and the firm and soft of “榛” and “苓”. “榛” here refers to the hazel tree, “苓” refers to a fungus plant. Since there is no equivalent word in English, Pound translated “苓” as “mallow” (a plant from Europe and North Africa). The translator arouses the same metaphorical thinking mechanism in the target language readers' consciousness through the

transformation of vehicle, so that the target language readers can obtain the same cognition and understanding as the source language readers.

Metaphor to Simile

Example (3)

《卫风·氓》 淇水汤汤，渐车帷裳。

Pound's version: now K'i's like a soup of mud,
the carriage curtains wet

This sentence means that the water was so strong that it wet the hangings of the carriage. The original poem uses “淇水” to metaphor love. “淇水” used to represent the sweet love, but now so dangerous. Here the translator adopts the strategy of metaphor to simile, directly using like to compare Qi Shui to a soup of mud, metaphorically saying that love is like Qi Shui to make people feel embarrassed, and the misfortune of the hostess to choose a mate.

Conclusion

This article in the framework of conceptual metaphor theory, analyzed the typical female metaphor and marriage metaphor in Pound's *Book of Songs*, and deeply studies the cognitive mechanisms hidden behind the metaphorical expression, further explains the translation strategies and cognitive effects of metaphor translation from the perspective of cognitive linguistics. Based on the above findings, Pound mainly adopted the translation strategies of metaphor equivalence, metaphor conversion and metaphor to simile in the process of metaphor translation, so as to achieve the maximum metaphorical equivalence. Metaphor translation is not only a linguistic symbol conversion at the rhetorical level, but a complex cross-cultural cognitive activity. In the process of metaphor translation, no matter what translation strategy is adopted, the translator needs to master the deep meaning and cultural connotation behind the metaphorical expression, and select the appropriate translation strategy on the basis of understanding the metaphorical cognitive process of the source language, so as to achieve the purpose of cultural communication and dissemination.

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