Comparative Study of Two Translation Versions of

The Moon and Sixpence From the Perspective of

Toury's Translation Norms

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This paper conducts a comparative study of Li Jihong's and Chen Yixuan's English Chinese translation versions of *The Moon and Sixpence* from the perspective of Toury's Translation Norms. Adequacy and acceptability are emphasized in Toury's Initial Norms, reflected in his Operational Norms. In the translation process, the translator must create a compromise between adequacy and acceptability. It is found that at the lexical, syntactic, and paratextual levels, Chen's translation seems to conform to the norms of the target culture and language in terms of acceptability, while Li's translation tends to conform to the norms of the source culture and language in terms of adequacy.

Keywords: The Moon and Sixpence, Toury's Translation Norms, adequacy and acceptability

Introduction

The Moon and Sixpence is one of the representative works written by Maugham, a famous British novelist and playwright. Maugham in his story interprets the weakness of human nature and criticizes the malformation relationship among people in the western society in his time. Readers can witness the social evilness as well as the ugliness and kindness of human nature from his novels, which are simple in style, clear in context, and full of twists and turns in plots.

The purpose of this paper is to compare Li Jihong's and Chen Yixuan's translation versions of the novel within the restrictions of initial and operational norms and analyze adequacy and acceptability of respective Chinese versions on lexical, syntactic, and paratextual levels. Li Jihong was born in Jiangxi Province in 1980. He has translated many foreign masterpieces, including *The Moon and Sixpence*, *The Great Gatsby*, etc. Chen Yixuan, a native of Taiwan, is a veteran translator of foreign literature.

The original work's artistic beauty can be creatively reproduced in literary translation. The translator's aesthetic sense helps to transform the beauty into figurative style of translation. The translator's aesthetic recreation is often pushed in two directions, thus causing the translation to display two distinct personalities (Zheng, 2000). The process of opposition and unification of two distinct languages and cultures is at the heart

of literary translation. Due to the differences in the translator's way of thinking, cultural background, and psychological characteristics, as well as the obvious differences between the two languages and cultures, numerous contradictions inevitably arise during the process of literary translation.

An Overview of Toury's Translation Norms

Norms are employed to play roles at an intermediate level between competence and performance. Competence refers to a set of options available to the translator, and performance the actual choice of options. Coseriu distinguished the basic system of language (Saussure's langue), actual speech (Saussure's parole), and the linguistic norm (Snell-Hornby, 1988). Levý in his "generative model" regards the process of translation as a decision-making process (Levý, Althoff, & Vidal, 2012). Popovič (2011) proposed that translation involves the confrontation of two sets of linguistic and discursive norms and conventions, namely those in the source text norms in the source text, and those in the target culture, or the target cultural part. Toury's translation studies, based on Levý (Levý et al., 2012) and Popovič (2011), not only establish the concept of norms in the study of translation, but also classify the practical approach to translation norms (Pym, Shlesinger, & Simeoni, 2008).

Toury (1995) believed that translation research belongs to empirical research and any translation research should start from the observable fact of the translated text itself, in order to reconstruct the unobserved facts. Toury (1995) initially adopts a behaviorist approach to the study: by ignoring the regularities caused by differences in language structure and by focusing on non-obligatory choices. Socio-cultural constraints, called norms by Toury (1995), can be used to explain the preferences exhibited by translators.

According to Toury's translational norms, translators are often subject to three types of norms: preliminary norms, initial norms, and operational norms. Preliminary norms involve two aspects: One is the translation policy which refers to the factors that govern the choices of text types, and the other is the directness of translation. The initial norms involve the relationship between "at least two sets of norm-systems". Operational norms are involved in the actual decision-making stage of translation. Preliminary norms and initial norms influence the translation task of the original text on macro-level, while the operational norms govern the translation task of original text on micro-level. Operational norms include matrical norms and textual-linguistic norms. The former mainly determines the integrity of the translation, while the latter influence word and sentence selection at the lexical and syntactic levels.

The Textual Choices of Li's and Chen's Translations Under the Constraints of Initial Norms and Operational Norms

Toury's Initial Norms govern the translator's choice between adequacy and acceptability. Translators are to make the choice between the norms of the original text and those of the target language. Operational Norms, the realization of the initial norms in the translation process, dominate the concrete operations and decisions made by the translators in the process of translation (Pym et al., 2008).

A translator can obey both the norms of the source language and the norms of the target norms. When a translator tends to the norms of the source language in the translation process, his/her translation may appear strange and unfamiliar in the target language culture because of the differences between the source and target cultures, and this tendency to the norms of the source language is called adequacy by Toury (1995). On the

contrary, when the translator adopts the norms of the target language culture to make the translation smoother and more acceptable to the target readers in the context of the inevitable shift from the original, Toury (1995) called it acceptability (from Gentzler, 2001).

The translation tendencies of Chen (Maugham, 2016a) and Li (Maugham, 2016b) are governed by the initial norms. Chen tends to favor the source language specification and strives for the adequacy of the translation, while Li tends to favor the target language specification and places more emphasis on the acceptability of the translation. The adequacy of Chen's translation and the acceptability of Li' translation is both realized in the translation process governed by the Operation Norms and reflected in the lexical level, the syntactic level, and paratextual level.

Comparative Analysis at the Lexical Level

Lexical translation plays an important role in language translation. A single word can have more than one meaning, and therefore translators should choose the most proper meaning for a word. Naturalization and dissimilation are two common methods of translation (Sun, 2003). Translators are always applying the two common methods for word translation. For example, the Chinese phrase "一石二鸟" is an dissimilation translation of the English phrase "to kill two birds with one stone", which tends to adequacy. The phrases "一箭双雕" and "一举两得" are the naturalization translation of the phrase "to kill two birds with one stone", which tend to acceptability. A careful reading of the two Chinese translation versions of *The Moon and Sixpence* reveals that Chen prefers the target culture when expressing the original word or phrase, often in a four-character format; Li prefers to be faithful to the original word or phrase. For example, Li translates "adore one another" into "相互欣赏", while Chen translates it into "相敬如宾" (Maugham, 2005; 2016a; 2016b). The original text describes the couple relationship between the Stricklands. The phrase "adore one another" means "相互欣赏", but since this is about the relationship between husband and wife, it is more appropriate to use the Chinese phrase "相敬如宾" to describe the mutual respect between husband and wife. Therefore, it can be seen that Li's translation "彼此相爱" is more adequacy-oriented, while Chen's translation "相敬如宾" is closer to Chinese culture and is more acceptability-oriented.

Take the phrase "paint and powder" as another example. Paint means "cosmetics", and powder means "powder for make-up". Each of these terms has a distinct meaning in relation to cosmetics, and their specific meanings are made clear in this context. Li (Maugham, 2016b) translated it into "梳妆打扮", meaning dressing up, while Chen (Maugham, 2016a) translated it into "涂脂抹粉", referring to the dressing up to hide the ugly nature, a derogatory word. The original text, on the other hand, intends to present an exaggerated depiction of the helplessness of the latter at the beginning of the war, a very subtle satire of the social phenomenon of the time. Compared with "梳妆打扮", "涂脂抹粉" implies irony, so Chen's adoption of the norms of the target language and culture makes the translation smoother in its inevitable transformation from the original, more acceptable to the target readers, and more inclined to acceptability.

Further, when it comes to the domesticating method of translation, the use of Chinese idioms naturally comes to mind. The four-character-formed words have the advantages of neat structure, concise language, and profound meaning, etc. If they are used appropriately in translation, they will indeed enhance the expressiveness of the translation and add luster to it (Sun, 2003). Chen prefers to translate the words into a four-character frame. For example, Chen (Maugham, 2016a) translates "Bringing with it", "the war has come",

and "wonderful" into "应运而生", "战火方兴", and "美则美矣", while Li (Maugham, 2016b) translates them into "带来了", "战争业已来临", and "美丽".

A translated text can be neither purely acceptable nor adequate. The "actual translation decision" refers to the compromise between the two extremes implied by the initial specification that the researcher is bound to make in the actual translation process (Toury, 1995). Therefore, from the comparison in terms of lexical level, it can be concluded that Li adopts the norms of the source language in the translation process, which is more inclined to adequacy. Chen adopts the norms of the target language, which is more inclined to acceptability.

Comparative Analysis at the Syntactic Level

Sentence processing entails actions such as sentence splitting and sentence combining. Translators either move closer to the norms of the source text or closer to those of the target text. Long sentences are common in English, whereas Chinese sentences are short and concise (Lian, 2010). Li prefers to deal with sentences in their original order, and unlike Li's treatment of sentences, Chen prefers to use concise pairs of sentences as well as the method of combining sentences.

Example 1:

Original version: The new evangel was old when Nineveh reared her greatness to the sky. There are gallant words which seem so novel to those that speak to them were said in accents scarcely changed a hundred times before. (Maugham, 2005)

Li's translation: 哪怕是新福音，到尼尼微繁荣昌盛的时候不也已经变成旧福音。那些慷慨激昂的人自以为他们说的话是前人闻所未闻的，殊不知此类豪言壮语已被说过上百遍，而且连说话的腔调也是大同小异。

Chen's translation: 尼尼微城的声势如日中天之时，新的福音书早已老旧。那些豪言壮语对说的人而言无比新奇，事实上早已是陈腔滥调。

Chen divides the sentence into four parts based on their inherent logic and meaning, in accordance with the target language's linguistic conventions. In addition, Chen uses the sentence structure of "早已" to transform "was/were" into two parallel sentences, i.e., "……早已……" and adopts the four-character-formed words "早已老旧" and "如日中天", "无比新奇" and "陈词滥调", which present a neat and orderly sentence structure, while Li translates these two sentences according to the structure of the original sentence. What's more, the traditional Chinese culture takes proportionality as beauty, and this traditional aesthetic psychology has a subtle influence on the Chinese language and is prominently reflected in the linguistic form of the four-character-formed words (Sun, 2003). Chen is more adept at using four-character words, focusing on counterpoint, reflecting the beauty of Chinese forms, and leaning more toward acceptability.

At the syntactic level, Li's translation conforms to the norms of the target language and culture in terms of acceptability, whereas Chen's translation conforms to the norms of the source language and culture in terms of adequacy.

Comparative Analysis at Paratextual Level

To use Genette's terminology (Genette & Maclean, 1991), peritexts (prefaces, blurbs, table of contents, etc.) help to tell us about the authorial and/or editorial intention behind the text. In translation studies, the peritext is integral part of the translation (H. T. Wang & H. Z. Wang, 2021). Therefore, it is also necessary to

consider the peritexts of the preface and annotations of the two translation versions to examine how the two translators add different peritexts to their translations under the constraints of the initial norms.

The preface of Chen's version, written by Liu Yu, a professor of political science at Tsinghua University, introduces the synopsis of the story from a second-person perspective, arousing the reader's interest in reading, leaning more towards the Chinese model of thinking, and tending to acceptability. Li (Maugham, 2016b) wrote the preface by himself briefly introducing English literary history, Maugham's life, and his personal views on the main theme of the essay how to balance "ideal" and "reality", leaning more toward adequacy.

Under the influence of translation tendencies regarding readers' reading habits and focusing on the acceptability of translations, both Li and Chen appended annotations to their translations; Li appended 107 annotations to his translation and Chen appended 47 annotations to his translation to help western English readers better understand and accept their translations.

Conclusions

A careful reading of Li's Chinese translation version reveals that Li's translation strictly preserves the form of the original text, fully conveying the content of the original text. Li's translation version fully reflects its tendency to follow the norms of the source language and attach importance to the adequacy of the translation to get as close as possible to the original text. A careful reading of Chen' Chinese translation version reveals that Chen's translation tendency is mainly manifested in the importance he attaches to the acceptability of his translations. His translations are vivid, using four-character patterns frequently, and highly readable, a reflection of the translator's artistic aesthetic. Under the influence of initial norms and operational norms, it is possible to conclude that Chen tends to conform to the norms of the target language and culture in terms of acceptability while simultaneously striving to ensure the adequacy of his translated texts, whereas Li tends to conform to the norms of the source language and culture while striving to create understandable translations for local readers.

Literary translation is different from other translations in that it is not a simple conversion and transmission of information between two languages. To a certain extent, Toury's Translation Norms provide normative inspiration for the translation of works as well as emphasizing the need for translators to pay more attention to the cultural aspects of the target and source languages.

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