

A Study on the Translation of *Love in a Fallen City* from the Perspective of Three Dimensional Transformation of Eco-Translatology

GUO Pin-pin

Wuhan University of Technology, Wuhan, China

MA Wen-li

Wuhan University of Technology, Wuhan, China

Love in a Fallen City is one of Eileen Chang's representative works and translated by Karen Kingsbury. The ecological environment of translation restricts and influences the translator's choice of translation strategies, methods and techniques in the process of translation. According to the eco-translatology, translation is a transformation from language dimension, culture dimension and communication dimension. This article analyzes the three-dimensional transformation between the source language and the target language in the English version of *Love in a Fallen City*, and holds that a good translation must be the translator's effective adaptation to the ecological environment including the source language, the source culture and the target culture.

Keywords: Eco-translatology, Three-dimensional transformation, *Love in a Fallen City*

1. Introduction

Love in a Fallen City is a famous short story in 1940s, which described the love story between the hero, Fan Liuyuan and the heroine, Bai Liusu. Its English version was translated by American scholar, Karen S. Kingsbury, and was published in 2007. The success of Karen Kingsbury's *Love in a Fallen City* lies not only in the translator's understanding and acceptance of traditional Chinese culture, but also in his deep understanding of the historical background and writing background of the original story. After its publication, Chinese scholars have studied its English version from many aspects. Their main research content includes translator's subjectivity, translation style, culture-loaded terms and so on. The main theories involved are hermeneutics, inter-subjectivity, reception aesthetics, etc. However, few studies attempt to study it from the perspective of eco-translatology. Therefore, this paper will try to study the translation of this novel from the perspective of eco-translatology. Eco-translatology is an interdisciplinary theory based on Darwin's natural selection theory. It explains the process of translation through adaptation and selection, which emphasizes on the "translator

GUO Pin-pin, master, student, Department of English, Wuhan University of Technology.

MA Wen-li, Ph.D., Professor, English department, Wuhan University of Technology, Wuhan, China.

centered” concept. It will analyze Karen Kingsbury’s translation from language, culture and communication dimensions, hoping to provide reference for eco-translatology theory application.

2. Methodology

This paper uses descriptive research method, literature research method, case study method. First, the thesis uses descriptive research method and literature research method to conclude the current study of *Love in a Fallen City* on the basis of eco-translatology at home and abroad. Next the paper will briefly introduce the eco-translatology theory, *Love in a Fallen City* and the translator Karen S. Kingsbury. Finally, under the guidance of eco-translatology theory, combined with the specific cases in the source text and target text, the paper adopts case study method to analyze the translation strategies and methods used in the translation of *Love in a Fallen City*.

3. Three-Dimensional Transformation Strategy Used in Idiom Translation of *Love in a Fallen City*

3.1 Transformation in Language Dimension

From the perspective of eco-translatology, translation is a selective process in which the translator adopts to the translation ecological environment and transform the text. Transformation in language dimension is a process in which translators choose from vocabulary, sentence patterns and other language forms and adapt to the ecological translation environment. Therefore in order to reestablish the features and charm of the original works, the translator must understand the systems and expressing habits of the two languages in depth, and interpret the connotative meaning in the source text during the translation process. Karen Kingsbury believes that each work of literature attempts to lead the reader to think beyond the figurative world. Translators must understand the essence of the original text and edit it carefully. Every change should be faithful to the essence of the original text. In the linguistic dimension, he adopts different translation methods flexibly through literal translation or free translation, in accordance with the strategies of domestication and foreignization. Such as:

Example (1) 自己骨肉，照说不该提钱的话。

They say you shouldn’t talk about money with your own flesh and blood.

骨肉 is translated as “flesh and blood”. In Chinese culture, this word is used to refer to the parents, brothers, children and other people with the closest blood. However, there is no such expression in Western culture. Therefore, the translator translates it into “flesh and blood”, which refers to the blood relations with you. It appeared in many manuscripts, such as Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice* where Gobbo says to his son, “If thou be Launcelot, thou art mine own flesh and blood”. Through domestication, Kingsbury achieves a language transformation between two countries.

Example (2) 今儿当面锣，对面鼓，发过话了，我可没有脸再住下去了！

But now that they’ve beat the drums, banged the gongs, and said it straight out, I’ve lost too much face to go on living here.

Example (3) 楼梯又旧，徐太太又胖，走得吱吱咯咯一片响。

The stairs were old and Mrs. Xu was large: they creaked and squeaked down the stairs together.

Example (4) 一双娇滴滴，滴滴娇的清水眼。

They were clear, lively, and slightly coquettish.

In the above examples, the words “beat” and “bang”, “creak” and “squeak”, “lively” and “slightly” follows a certain rhyme pattern. In order to make the readers have a better reading experience, the translator manages to maintain the rhyme for the target readers. He also reveals the connotative meaning of 今儿当面锣，对面鼓，which is a metaphor for face-to-face consultation, confrontation, argument, or exchange of opinions. In the text, the Liusu’s brother clearly shows his attitude that she shouldn’t live in his home anymore. Therefore Liusu says these words to Mrs Xu. The translator not only maintains the rhyme but also makes the reader understand the meaning.

3.2 Transformation in Culture Dimension

The transformation in culture dimension means that translators pay attention to the cultural differences between the source language and the target language, and avoid the misunderstanding of the target language readers. Therefore, translators need to adapt and choose appropriately in different cultures (Jin, 2019). Although Karen Kingsbury has a rich knowledge about Chinese culture, she can not escape the great differences between English and Chinese in ways of thinking, religious beliefs, political culture, social culture and values. When doing translation, Karen Kingsbury needs to be faithful to the source text and meet the cultural background requirements of the target readers. Therefore, both the domestication and foreignization are used in her translation .

Example (5) 你生是他家的人，死是他家的鬼，树高千丈，落叶归根 (Zhang, 2012, p. 161)

As long as you live you belong to his family, and after you die your ghost will belong to them too! The tree may be a thousand feet tall, but the leaves fall back to the roots. (Karen, 2007, p. 113)

树高千丈，落叶归根 is a Chinese idiom, meaning that things have a certain destination.

In the source text, this is what the third brother says to Liusu after she divorced with her husband. Her third brother intends to persuade Liusu to return to her husband’s home and take his heritage. The translator adopts the foreignization strategy and literally translates this idiom to save the cultural image of 树 and 河. The literally translated sentence serves as a further explanation to the sentence before it, so that the readers can understand the meaning of these two idioms without extra effort.

3.3 Transformation in Communication Dimension

The translator’s transformation in communication dimension is an adaptive choice based on bilingual communicative intention in translation activities. In order to meet the reading needs and expectations of target readers, the translator, as a senior Sinology researcher and translator, translates the language-loaded words in his works according to their meanings, so as to meet the purpose of communication. Communicative translation “attempts to offer its readers an effect as close as possible to that obtained on the readers of the original” (Newmark, 2001, p. 39) stresses. Generally speaking, the realization of communicative intention is to satisfy higher requirements for translation on the basis of the adaptive transformation from linguistic and cultural dimensions (Hu Gengshen, 2011). Therefore, Karen Kingsbury attaches great importance to the translation from communicative dimension. She thinks that literary translators are fighting simultaneously on multiple fronts, trying to reconstruct a whole new world in another language so that it can be somehow equated with the world in the original in hearing, visual, and sense.

Example (6) 偶然也还叫声“六妹”、“六姑”、“刘小姐”，只怕她当真嫁到香港的阔人，衣锦荣归，大家总得留个见面的余地，不反着得罪她。

Once in a while they even addressed her quite respectfully, thinking that if she really married a rich man in Hong Kong and returned home in glory, they'd better be on speaking terms with her. It wouldn't do to offend her.

There are many honorific words in the source text. Honorific words refer to expressions with polite and humble flavor used in daily conversations or in written forms. In Western culture, such expressions are relatively scarce. If the translator literally translate them, the target readers may misunderstand the relationship and can't figure out the connotative meaning behind them. Thus, Kingsbury adopts the free translation method to translate the honorific words “六妹”、“六姑”、“刘小姐” into “quite respectfully”. In this way, readers can clearly understand the changed attitude of Bai's family members.

Conclusion

This paper is a study on Kingsbury's translation of *Love in a Fallen City* within the theoretical framework of eco-translatology. This paper deems that in the process of translation, on the one hand, Kingsbury selects the translational eco-environment that selects the translator in reverse. On the other hand, the translator adapts to the translational eco-environment suitable for the translator.

Kingsbury once said that “I simply try to cram into the translation every bit of nuance and feeling that I found in the original, and let the rest take care of itself”. Therefore she conducts a holistic consideration of translational eco-environment, composed of source text style, language feature, ideology, culture and history. She claimed that every literary work attempts to lead readers to think beyond the concrete world. The translator must understand the essence of the original text and edit it carefully. Every change should be faithful to the essence of the original text. Therefore she selects appropriate translation strategies and methods from linguistic, cultural and communicative dimensions, and makes adaptive transformation to meet reader's expectation and aesthetic need.

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