

Compare Eileen Chang's Theories on Chinese Life and Fashion and Her Self-translated Work Geng Yi Ji Based on Functions

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Abstract: Zhang Ailing is a famous modern Chinese female writer. Due to the influence of her family atmosphere and her own educational experience, she has a high level of expertise in both traditional Chinese studies and English. Her profound literary background in both English and Chinese has enabled her to create many excellent literary works and literary translations. Her articles published in the English monthly magazine of the 20th Century have made her stand out in the literary world, Therefore, "Chinese Life and Fashions", as their first English prose published in this journal, has great research value. This article is based on Eugene Nida's principle of functional equivalence, the differences between Chinese and English languages, and some translation strategies to compare and analyze the two texts. These translation strategies include addition, deletion, domestication, etc. The employment of various translation procedures is based on the target language readers' diverse cultural backgrounds, as well as the target language readers chosen by Zhang Ailing. And the use of these strategies also reflects Eugene Nida's theory of functional equivalence.

Keywords: Eileen Chang, functional equivalence, additional translation

1. Introduction

Zhang Ailing is a famous modern female writer in China. She is known as a talented woman. Due to the influence of family atmosphere and her own schooling experience, Zhang Ailing has extremely high attainments in traditional Chinese studies and English. Her profound English and Chinese literary heritage enabled her to create many excellent literary works and literary translation works. Among them, Zhang Ailing's translation works include translations of many excellent American literary works, such as "The Old Man and the Sea", as well as self-translations of her literary works. At the same time, Zhang Ailing has many excellent prose works, and her prose works are diverse. This diversity is reflected in many aspects. First of all, the diversity of her prose works is reflected in the diversity of language style. Yu Bin divided Zhang Ailing's prose into "Zhang Kan style" and "Whispers" [1]. Secondly, this diversity is reflected in the diversity of themes, such as the subject matter of Zhang Ailing's prose works including women's life, personal life, urban life, etc. This diversity is also reflected in the diversity of style. The style of her prose works has its own style. For example, the themes of Zhang Ailing's prose works include women's life, personal life, urban life, etc. In terms of diversity, the style of prose works includes self-narration, essays, quotations, preface

posts, cultural sketches, etc [2]. "Chinese Life and Fashion" and "Geng Yi Ji" to be analyzed in this article are both prose, and the style is essay. The characteristics of the essay are: the materials used are extremely wide, the article has no fixed pattern, the article's structure is relatively random, and there are no constraints when writing as one wishes. At the same time, essays also have the characteristics of various types of prose: they are authentic and describe objective facts that have happened [3]. Since it was originally an English version and Zhang Ailing herself has extremely high English proficiency and has been exposed to the culture of English-speaking countries for a long time, her original work may also have been influenced by the sketches of English-speaking countries at that time. In "Chinese Life and Fashions" and the translation "Geng Yi Ji", Zhang Ailing not only introduced the phenomenon of Chinese clothing but also added her humorous comments and literary criticism, criticizing the superiority of men and the inferiority of women at that time and the patriarchal treatment of women oppression [2].

Zhang Ailing's "Geng Yi Ji" is a self-translation of her English work "Chinese Life and Fashions," which was published in the January 1943 issue of the English magazine *The XXth Century*, the audience of this magazine was foreigners living in the Shanghai Concession. Its Chinese version "Geng Yi Ji" was published in the journal "Gujin" in the same year. This journal was founded by some literati in the puppet Wang government.

Whether it is the original work "Chinese Life and Fashion" or its self-translated work "Geng Yi Ji", it not only simply describes the development of Chinese fashion or the development of Chinese clothing, but also discusses a topic related to national character through the history of the evolution of Chinese clothing over the past century - the character of the Chinese people [4]. Although the writing themes of the original text and the translation are the same, Zhang Ailing, as a female writer who is both the author and the translator, excluded many influence factors during the translation process when creating the article, and used some translation strategies to enrich her translation. This paper will analyze the translation strategies used by Zhang Ailing in translating her works and the differences between the original text and the translation based on Eugene Nida's functional equivalence theory.

2. Eugene A. Nida's Theory of Functional Equivalence

Functional equivalence theory is a theory and method for dealing with culture and translation summarized by American linguist Eugene A. Nida during his study of the Bible [5]. He first proposed "formal equivalence" in 1964. With the concept of "functional equivalence", he gave a precise definition of "dynamic equivalence" in 1969: the readers of the translation and the readers of the original text must have the same reaction after reading the article [6]. In 1993, Eugene Nida defined "dynamic equivalence" and "Dynamic equivalence" is deepened into "functional equivalence". The theory of "functional equivalence" tells translators to pay attention to the feelings and status of the readers of the translation. Although its theory emphasizes both formal equivalence and functional equivalence, when both cannot exist at the same time, the primary goal should be to pursue content. Eugene Nida also divides functional equivalence into the lowest level and the highest level. The lowest level of equivalence refers to the fact that the readers of the translation can understand how the readers of the original text understand the original text by reading the translation, the ultimate level of equivalence is achieved when readers of the translation understand it in the same way that readers of the original text do [7]. In summary, Eugene Nida's functional equivalence theory enables translators to see that when translating an article, the translator must use vocabulary and grammar flexibly. Grammar is to make the translation logical and smooth to the greatest extent. Vocabulary, in particular, refers to the translator's translation of foreign words, which must be reasonably translated based on different cultural backgrounds [8]. In short, Eugene Nida's functional equivalence

theory provides translators with new ideas and puts forward new requirements for translating original texts.

3. Analysis

3.1. Sentence

3.1.1. Complexity and Simplicity

In “Chinese Life and Fashions”, the author, Eileen Chang, uses relatively complex and formal sentences, but on the contrary, in "Geng Yi Ji", the translator, Eileen Chang, is concise and uses relatively simple sentences.

Example 1

Of course, red was taboo to the widow, who was confined to black; but she might, after a decent number of years had elapsed since her bereavement, wear a 'lavender or 'lake,' 'blue,' or 'blue,' or 'blue,' or 'blue. lavender or 'lake blue,' provided that her parents-in-law were still alive.

寡妇系黑裙，可是丈夫过世多年之后，如有公婆在堂，她可以穿湖色或雪青。

It can be seen that the sentences in the original are more complex, containing modifiers and subordinate clauses, while the sentences in the translation are simple and clear. Eileen Chang's treatment of the text is based on her consideration of the different cultural backgrounds of the audience groups of the two texts, in order to achieve functional equivalence, so that the target readers can understand her meaning. That is, the low status of women in ancient China was reflected in women's dress, and the constraints of women under the feudal society. The rigidity of English is reflected in the fact that it has a strict subject-predicate structure and is bound by form, while Chinese is flexible and not bound by form, and the sentences are more diffuse [9].

3.1.2. Hypotaxis and Parataxis

Based on simple sentence structure, the statements in the translated text are more vivid than those in the original text. Eileen Chang, as the translator, retains her consistent prose writing style in the translated text: gorgeous, and rich in rhetoric, reflecting the translator's deep cultural heritage. The words used in the original text also reflect Eileen Chang's high level of English. However, to meet the reading needs of Western readers and the characteristics of the English language itself, the original English version uses a lot of conjunctions, and the wording is as close as possible to the Western cultural background with a weak sense of imagery.

Example 2

The narrow pleats, numbering up to a hundred, served as a time-honoured test of feminine grace. held herself with such dignity and restraint that there was visible but a slight, practically imperceptible quiver in the pleated lines; whereas the maiden of low degree, however enchanting, went tramp, tramp, tramp, causing a boisterous commotion in the delicate folds.

家教好的姑娘，莲步姗姗，百褶裙虽不至于纹丝不动，也只限于最轻微的摇颤。不惯穿裙的小家碧玉走起路来便予人以惊风骇浪的印象。

This sentence has a large number of prepositions, conjunctions, and connectives such as "to", "as", and "whereas" in the original text, all of which are related to the characteristics of English itself. This is related to the fact that English is a synthetic and grammatical language, focusing on logic and sentence structure integrity, while Chinese is an ideographic language with few formal means of connection and focusing on implicit coherence, commonly using the four-character grid, which is one of the major features of the Chinese ideographic language. For example, a large number of Chinese

idioms are used in the translation, such as "莲步姗姗" and "小家碧玉", which impress the readers deeply.

3.1.3. Naturalization Translation of Sentences

Example 3

The marvellous thing about the Chinese corset is that even at the time, what we see is not a realistic image of a woman, but a non-physical concept of Byzantine severity and Pre-Raphaelite spirituality.

中国女人的紧身背心的功用实在奇妙——衣服再紧些，衣服底下的肉体也还不是写实派的作风，看上去不大像个女人而像一缕诗魂。

The phrase "one of Byzantine severity and Pre-Raphaelite spirituality" in the original text of this sentence is a metaphor used based on a Western cultural context, whereas in the translation a poetic metaphorical device is used which is more acceptable to Chinese readers.

3.2. Vocabulary

3.2.1. Omission

Since the audience groups of the two texts are in different cultural backgrounds, in order to make the readers in the two cultural backgrounds have the same reading experience as possible, Eileen Chang, who is both the author and the translator of the two texts, used the strategies of deleting, adding, changing and increasing translations in the creation of the two texts.

Example 4

Young ladies brightened up the bleak winter months with the 'Chow Kwuen Hood', named after the historical beauty Wang Chow Kwuen, an imperial handmaid in the second century A.D. She is always pictured on horseback, with a fur hood and a despondent expression, on her way north to marry the king of the Huns, who is the king of the Huns. She is always pictured on horseback, with a fur hood and a despondent expression, on her way north to marry the king of the Huns, whom it was China's policy to pacify.

姑娘们的“昭君套”为阴森的冬月添上点色彩。

This example shows that the author uses the translation strategy of abridged translation. In the original text, the author explains in detail for the Western readers the origin of 'Chow Kwuen Hood' - in the history of China, the policy of pacification was often used to pacify other peoples through the policy of peace and marriage, Wang Zhaojun was a courtesan sent to the Hun ruler, whom China aimed to appease. The hat that she wore on her way to the Western Han Dynasty was called 'Chow Kwuen Hood'. The added explanation in the original text not only lets Western readers know what 'Chow Kwuen Hood' is, but also lets them know that in Chinese history, women have been used as political victims and as political opponents. It also expresses the author's central idea of the article, which is that women in China have always been in an unequal position. The author eliminated this explanation in the translation because the character of "Wang Zhaojun" is very familiar to Chinese readers [10].

Example 5

On top of all this came the 'Cloudy-Shouldered Sleeveless Jacket,' so called because of its broad edging in the pattern of stylised curling clouds, striking against the plain dark ground.

三件袄子之上又加着“云肩背心”，黑缎宽镶，盘着大云头。

The author of this sentence also uses the translation strategy of deletion. In the original text, the author explains the term 'Cloudy-Shouldered Sleeveless Jacket,' and Chinese readers are more familiar with this kind of clothing, so the translator will not repeat it.

3.2.2. Domesticating Translation

Example 6

The trouble with old Chinese dress designers was that they did not know the all-importance of brevity. After all, a woman is not a Gothic cathedral.

古中国的时装设计家似乎不知道，一个女人到底不是大观园。

The translator has adopted a naturalising translation strategy for this sentence. The translator translates "Gothic cathedral" (哥特式大教堂) as "Grand View Garden". The author is trying to convey the idea that Chinese women's clothing is overly decorated and cumbersome, so the original text compares Chinese women with the Gothic cathedral, which is meant to point out that the Gothic cathedral is gorgeous and complicated, while women, on the contrary, are not suitable for women with overly decorated clothing. The Gothic cathedral is a very graphic metaphor for Western readers, but most Chinese people at the time did not know about Western architecture, so the translator translated it as the Grand View Garden in the Dream of the Red Chamber in Chinese literature, which is also very ornate in architectural style, so the author can use this term here to play the same metaphorical role [11].

Example 7

Was it the Oriental sense of moderation which softened it by wearing underneath a floor-length gown of sleek velveteen, with scandalously long slits up the thighs, revealing the long floppy pants of the same fabric, edged with silver lace, suggestive of harems? the thighs, revealing the long floppy pants of the same fabric, edged with silver lace, suggestive of harems?

而恪守中庸之道的中国女人在那雄赳赳的大衣底下穿着拂地的丝绒长袍，袍叉开到大腿上，露出同样质料的长裤子，裤脚上闪着银色花边。

The translator also uses the strategy of naturalisation in translating this sentence. The translator translates "the Oriental sense of moderation" as "中庸之道", which means that Chinese people are more conservative and introverted, and this is reflected in women's dress code, which means that women are asked not to wear clothes that are too revealing, such as slit skirts and long trousers with silver lace. The author is trying to convey that Chinese people are more conservative and introverted, and this is reflected in women's attire in that women are required not to dress too revealingly, and to wear a pair of trousers underneath a slit skirt. The Oriental sense of moderation is too abstract for Chinese readers, so Eileen Chang translates it into the more concrete and culturally distinctive "Way of the Mean", which has been passed down to the Chinese for a long time. For Chinese people, the Middle Way is a Confucian idea that has been passed down for thousands of years, and it is the rule of life, Chinese readers are well aware of the characteristics of the Middle Way.

3.2.3. Amplification

Example 8

In modern hats and dresses the details always have a point – to bring out the color of the eyes, to create the illusion of a bosom, to lengthen, to shorten, to call attention to the waist, to annihilate the hips, etc.

现代西方的时装，不必要的点缀品未尝不花样多端，但是都有个目的——把眼睛的蓝色发扬光大起来，补助不发达的胸部，使人看上去高些或矮些，集中注意力在腰肢上，消灭臀部过度的曲线……

The translator of this sentence used the translation method of augmentation. The author added the subject "Western" and the modifier "blue" during the translation. This is because Western readers are in the development trend of modern fashion. They know what role eye decorations can play, and the fashion characteristics of Chinese readers in the current era are very different, so the translator

emphasizes to the readers that it refers to the characteristics of modern Western clothing, and by emphasizing the relationship between the West and the differences in appearance between the East and the West enable readers to understand the role of embellishment in Western clothing. Zhang Ailing's series of processing of words embodies Eugene Nida's principle of functional equivalence, which emphasizes that the translator should reflect cultural factors in the translation to achieve functional equivalence.

4. Writing Perspective

In these two works, Zhang Ailing has dual roles: author and translator. Due to the transformation of her two identities and the influence of her own cultural background, she has two writing perspectives. In "Geng Yi Ji", Zhang Ailing, a Chinese woman and translator, stands from the perspective of Chinese readers. The words used are delicate and subjective, and words such as "I" and "we" are often used. In Chinese Life and Fashions, Zhang Ailing's words are rational and objective (for example, "professional beauties" in the original text, the author in the translation Translate it as "妓女"), and it is like analyzing Chinese clothing and hairstyle fashion from the same perspective as foreign readers. Moreover, Zhang Ailing has a dual identity and has great autonomy in the content of her writing. She can flexibly change the translation without affecting the expression of the content through translation strategies such as additions and deletions.

Example 9

The history of Chinese fashions consists almost exclusively of the steady elimination of those details.

我们的时装的历史,一言以蔽之,就是这些点缀品的逐渐减去。

The subject of the original sentence is "The history of Chinese fashions" while the subject of the translation is 我们时装的历史". This is one of the characteristics of this sentence that simply describes the development of Chinese fashion from the perspective of Chinese readers.

Example 10

Fashion in China is not an industry under the control of a few great fashion houses like Lelong's or Schiaparelli's. It is impossible to tell who starts these fashions, because the Chinese do not greatly prize originality, regarding imitation as a great compliment, so that the first one to wear something different is invariably lost among a host of copycats.

我们的时装不是一种有计划有组织的实业,不比在巴黎,几个规模宏大的时装公司如 Lelong's Schiaparelli's,垄断一切,影响及整个白种人的世界。我们的裁缝却是没主张的。公众的幻想往往不谋而合,产生一种不可思议的洪流。裁缝只有追随的份儿。因为这缘故,中国的时装更可以作民意的代表。

The subject of the original text is "Fashion in China", while the subject of the translation is "Our Fashion". The author of this sentence describes the difference between the fashion industries in China and Paris.

5. Conclusion

Based on some translation strategies, Eugene Nida's functional equivalence theory, and the characteristics of Chinese and English, this article makes a detailed comparison between "Geng Yi Ji" and "Chinese Life and Fashions" in terms of wording, sentences, and writing perspectives. The differences reflect Zhang Ailing's translation process as the author and translator based on the different audience groups of the two essays as well as her writing style and literary literacy. This article also compares vocabulary and sentences in more detail, which will be beneficial to Zhang Ailing's self-translation in the future. Research on details in the works, but this article lacks the

combination with grammatical knowledge, so future related research can increase the combination of grammatical content.

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