Original Research Article

On the Translations of *Nie Xiao Qian* from the Perspective of Pragmatic Adaptation

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	Nie Xiao Qian, translated into THE MAGIC SWORD by Herbert Giles and THE MAGIC SWORD AND THE MAGIC BAG by John Minford, is one of the most famous stories in Liao Zhai Zhi Yi. Despite the fact that there are a lot of English translations for Liao Zhai Zhi Yi, few scholars have paid attention to Minford's version and none of them have ever compared two translations from the perspective of pragmatic adaptation, more specifically, Chinese and English orientation differences. Therefore, this paper aims to introduce a new perspective for Liao Zhai Zhi Yi's translation analysis to bridge the gap and figure out which one is more result oriented by comparing the translation of Herbert Giles and that of John Minford. Based on the theory of pragmatic adaptation, more specifically, the theory that Chinese is more process oriented and English is more result oriented, this paper analyzes some translated sentences of the two English versions, and as a result, finds that both English translations are more result oriented than its Chinese version while Herbert Giles's version is more resulted-orientation.

Introduction

Liao Zhai Zhi Yi, commonly known as *Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio*, is the work of Pu Songling, a famous novelist in the Qing Dynasty. It contains 491 short stories, most of which are the strange stories about foxes and ghosts. "Liao Zhai" is the name of Pu's study, "Zhi" means description, and "Yi" refers to the strange stories. So, the name indicates that the book is the description of the strange story in the study Liao Zhai.

The whole book, which strongly criticizes the corruption and darkness of the society at that time and expresses people's aspiration, is highly appreciated by many scholars both at home and abroad. Because of its profound theme and unique artistic techniques, the translation of this work has always been one of the focus of translation circles. As one of the Chinese classical novels, *Liao Zhai Zhi Yi* is also the one with the largest number of translation versions in different languages.

In 1880, Thos.de la Rue in London published the two-volume English version of *Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio* translated by Herbert Giles. This is the earliest English translation of *Liao Zhai Zhi Yi* and contains 164 stories. In 2006, the translation of John Minford's was published by Penguin Group. His version includes 104 stories and it takes Minford 14 years to translate the book. He rectifies some mistranslations in Giles's version and understands those stories in a different way from those of the previous translators, making his version one of the representatives of the contemporary world.

Nie Xiaoqian, translated into *THE MAGIC SWORD* by Herbert Giles and *THE MAGIC SWORD AND THE MAGIC BAG* by John Minford, is one of the most famous stories among them. It tells the story about Nie Xiaoqian, a beautiful girl who was killed by the evil at 18 years old and turned into a ghost after death. In the original book, she was threatened to do evil things to men under the control of monster Ye Cha despite her reluctance and encountered Ning Caichen one day by chance. Though she was assigned to murder Ning as usual, she was impressed by Ning's

integrity and told him the truth. Later, Ning helped her escape from Ye Cha's clutches as he promised and introduced Nie Xiaoqian to his family. In the end, they fell in love with each other and lived a happy life together with their babies. It has been adapted into a variety of TV series and movies since 1960, such as *The Enchanting Shadow, A Chinese Ghost Story, The Nocturnal Legends*, etc.

Hereby, based on the Chinese and English orientation differences put forward by Wang Jianguo (2019), this article will compare two translations of *Nie Xiaoqian* with comprehensive analysis and pick up the better one.

Literature Review

As one of the most translated classical works in China, the study of the translation of *Liaozhaizhiyi* has attracted the attention of many researchers. In the cross database primary search of CNKI, taking 2010-2019 as the time range, the full-text search element "Liaozhaizhiyi" and "English translation". After careful analysis, a total of 27 articles directly take the English version or English translation of *Liaozhaizhiyi* as the writing object.

As shown in the table:

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Quantity	2	2	3	2	8	1	2	2	4	1

In terms of the writing of these research papers, there are mainly general introduction, translator research, translation strategy, cultural research, translation appreciation and comparison, as well as linguistic research. Most scholars refer to the translation of Herbert Giles and compare it with translations of Martin Buber, Sidney L.Sondergard, etc. from the perspectives of pseudo translation, cultural differences, translator's style and so on. Seldom of them make judgement from the perspective from Chinese and English orientation differences and few of them make comparison between Herbert Giles' translation and Minford's translation, leaving large room for future exploration.

To follow the step of the times, Chinese culture should be innovated to promote the modernization (Yang, 2020). The pragmatic study of Chinese and English orientation differences is proposed by Wang Jianguo and He (2014) and developed by He Ziran, Bao Chuanyun, Wang Jianguo. By comparing Pinkham's improved versions with the original in her book, *The Translator Guide to Chinglish*, Wang Jianguo and He Ziran (2014) finds that in the Pinkham's improved versions, the meanings of processes are left linguistically invisible while those of results linguistically represented.

On the basis of this finding, they point out a pragmatic difference between Chinese and English orientation difference, namely, Chinese is process-oriented and English resulted-oriented.

The process of Chinese is also continuous, tracing from the beginning to the result. At the same time, the continuous combination of multiple results blurs the boundary between the results and processes. In short, there is no clear boundary between the process and the result of Chinese language. They are all continuous, that is, unbounded. By saying process-oriented, it means that the speaker mainly focuses on the procedure of the whole event. Even if he may also talk about the result when expressing the event, he often has to mention the process first. While the result-oriented refers to speaker's attention to result. The process of English is the intermittent combination of multiple results, and what a single sentence expresses may also be result-orientated. Even if there is an English sentence with verbs showing action process, it also has more sense of resulted orientation due to its time marks, etc. There are clear boundaries between the results, that is, they are bounded. Although the speaker may also talk about the process, it is often implied or compared with the result. In most cases, the process is to be represented by a secondary language structure, that is, the focus of discourse will always be on the result.

Actually, some previous scholars have also mentioned relevant differences between Chinese and English, for example: Lian Shuneng (2006) believes that Chinese, which often ends with a conclusion sentence, attaches great importance to induction while English, which prefers to start with a topic sentence, emphasizes on deduction. Liu Miqing (2006: 409) holds that Chinese, as it is likely to use verbs, is a dynamic language while English is static as a result of its preference for nomination. Pan Wenguo (1997: 379) also mentions that Chinese forms a non-morphic language, of which verbs are flexible and not bounded by morphology, leading to its verb advantage.

In Wang's book, he also derives a C-E translation principle based on this pragmatic principle: translators need to set the target audience as native English and should reflect their pragmatic orientation in the translated works.

Analysis of Translations
Herbert Giles' translation is the most influential version in the past century (Wang, 2015), while Minford's translation, referring to Giles' version, is the most representative translation of the contemporary era.

The orientation differences between Chinese and English can be reflected in many aspects, including the words, sentences and paragraphs. This paper will mainly deal with the English words (verbs and adjectives) and sentences (which shows the procedure and sentence type transformation) in the two translations and judge which is closer to the resulted-orientation principle.

Resulted Orientation of Words
Some verbs and adjectives of English can contain more than one meaning and cover what the Chinese speakers want to speak in long expressions. The tense of verb can also compress the text.

1- Verbs
Chinese people are accustomed to using more than one words or characters to describe an action, for example, the four-character phrases "取得进步", "获得成就", while in English, such expressions can and should be reduced to make sentence concise.

Let's see the first example.

Case 1:

临别泣曰:"妾堕玄海，求岸不得。郎君义气干云，必能**拔生救苦**。倘肯囊妾朽骨，**归葬**安宅，不啻再造。"	
Herbert Giles	Minford
At parting she wept, and said, "I am about to sink into the great sea, with no friendly shore at hand. But your sense of duty is boundless, and you can **save** me. If you will collect my bones and **bury** them in some quiet spot, I shall not again be subject to these misfortunes."	As she left him she wept. "I am sinking into a dark sea and cannot reach the further shore! But you are so strong! You are so bright and good, I know you can **put an end to** my pain. **Take my bones back home** with you, I beg you, and give them a decent burial. Set them at peace and bring me back to life!"

First, let's look at "拔生救苦". In this case, "拔生" and "救苦" are actually the words with similar meaning that refers to the action of saving people from pains and sufferings. Minford uses the phrase "put an end to" while Herbert Giles directly compresses it into one English verb "save", which means prevent people from ruin, destruction, or harm. In Collins dictionary (2008), "save", as a verb, is explained as "If you save someone or something, you help them to avoid harm or to escape from a dangerous or unpleasant situation." Clearly, the meaning of the single word covers what the Chinese wants to express.

Similarly, "归葬" refers to the transport of the body back to his hometown for burial. It contains two action, namely, take it back home and bury it. Based on this, Minford translates it into "take my bones back home" literally. However, as we all know, when a person is to be buried, his flesh or bones are definitely taken to some place where he is familiar with when he is alive, in most cases, his home. The purpose of taking him home is to bury him and the focus of "归葬" is "葬". Considering the whole context as well, Nie Xiaoqian is hurry to go and doesn't have much time to say it in a complex way, so here, one word "bury" in Herbert Giles's version is clearer and more suitable.

Here is another example.

Case 2:

宁悟为革囊，**取悬**他室。	
Herbert Giles	Minford
Ning at once understood her, and **hung up** the sword-case in another place;	Ning knew it must be the leather bag, and he **took it down and hung it** in another room.

In this case, "取悬" suggests a process which means to "take it down and hang it up" as translated by Minford. But based on our common knowledge, when we want to hang up the stuff which has already been on the wall, the first action is definitely to take it down. So, in English, "hang up" along can cover the meaning and present the result that the sword is at last hung up in another place. In this sense, Minford's translation seems to be redundant and doesn't show result-orientation of English.

Case 3:

迫营谋既就，**趣装欲归**。	
Herbert Giles	Minford
He then fulfilled his promise and **prepared** to go home,	Having concluded his business in Jinhua, he **packed** his bags in readiness to return home.

The expression of "趣装欲归" includes three verbs. First is "趣装", it means to pack his stuffs quickly. Second is "欲", which means "want to" and refers to a mental process. The third is "归", namely, "go back".

In Herbert Giles's translation, as we can see here, the translator seizes the core of these actions and condenses the whole process into one English verb "prepare". There is no doubt that whether it is the action of packing or the thought of return, what he does is indeed still an action of preparation. Judging from this aspect, Minford's word-for-word translation seems to be redundant and doesn't show much resulted-orientation of English.

Case 4:

言次，女已翩然入，**拜伏**地下。	
Herbert Giles	Minford
in the middle of which in **rushed** Hsiao-ch'ien, and **threw** herself on the ground before them.	Even as they were talking, Little Beauty **flitted** into the room and **prostrated** herself before the lady of the house.

In Chinese "拜伏" includes two actions. First is "拜", which means "fell down; on bended knees" and the second "伏" means "bend over with body lying on the ground". It describes a set of actions while in English versions, the two writers both only use one verb to translate it.

In dictionary, "throw" is explained as "If you throw your body or part of your body into a particular position or place, you move it there suddenly and with a lot of force." It presents a tendency and the force of the action. "prostrate" is defined as "If you prostrate yourself, you lie down flat on the ground, on your front, usually to show respect for God or a person in authority". At the first sight, we may think "prostrate" is the perfect explanation which shows the result of action. However, if we consider the specific context, "throw" not only expresses the final gesture of Nie Xiaoqian but also indicates her anxious feelings (it is because of her worries that she rushes into the room and bends down).

The tense of English verbs can indicate the time and compress the whole translation, showing the resulted-orientation of English.

Case 5:

既各寝，燕以箱箧置窗上，**就枕移时**，齁如雷吼。	
Herbert Giles	Minford
and by-and-by they both lay down to sleep; and Yen, **having placed** his boxes on the window-sill, was soon snoring loudly.	Yan placed the box to which he had been referring on the window-sill, and **the minute** his head touched his pillow he fell fast asleep and began snoring like thunder.

In the original text, the writer Pu Songling has to use "时" to tell his readers that the two actions happen at the same time. Although we can still use "the moment", "when" or other similar expressions, it is not concise and cannot show the resulted orientation. While in Herbert Giles's version, he applies "having placed" to note the happening time. The tense of verb "place" and the "-ing" form of "have" simply include all the things.

Case 6:

迨营谋**既就**，**趣装欲归**。	
Herbert Giles	Minford
He then **fulfilled** his promise and **prepared** to go home,	**Having concluded** his business in Jinhua, he **packed** his bags in readiness to return home.

"既就" means "having done something". It often comes after a specific process or an object to indicate a condition or the beginning time of another action. In English, fulfill, as a verb, means "bring to completion or reality; achieve or realize (something desired, promised, or predicted); carry out (a task, duty, or role) as required, pledged, or expected", which easily covers the meaning of "既就" here. Compared with the expression "Having concluded", it condenses the meaning of two words and thus is the better choice.

2- Adjectives

Case 1:

燕捧箧检征，取一物，对月嗅视，**白光晶莹**，长可二寸，径韭叶许。	
Herbert Giles	Minford
The former then opened the box, and took out something which he smelt and examined by the light of the moon. It was **dazzlingly white** like crystal, and about two inches in length by the width of an onion leaf in breadth.	as he picked up the box and inspected it, then took something from it and held it up in the moonlight, smelling it and examining it with great care. The object was about two inches long and the width of a spring onion leaf. It **shone with a crystalline** white light.

Judging from the whole context, we know that Yan Chixia is looking at the sword in the moonlight, and "白光晶莹" in the original text can be understood as the metal sword's reflection of moonlight. According to our common knowledge, it is shinning and even, to some extent, dazzling. Thus, in Herbert Giles's version, the translator uses "dazzlingly white" to imply the specific condition of the sword caused by reflection. It directly indicates a result. But the latter, transferring adjectives into verb "shone", seems to describe the procedure of reflection. Therefore, in this case, Gile's translation more resulted-oriented and concise compare with Minford's.

The Case 4 in the last section is also a good example.

言次，女已**翩然入**，拜伏地下。	
Herbert Giles	Minford
in the middle of which in **rushed** Hsiao-ch'ien, and threw herself on the ground before them.	Even as they were talking, Little Beauty **flitted** into the room and prostrated herself before the lady of the house.

In Chinese, Pu Songling uses "翩然" to modify the way Nie Xieqian is entering the room. It gives readers a feeling of swiftness and informs the fast speed of her pace.

On the one hand, it seems that both translations reduce the process into a result-oriented verb and neither of them explain "翩然" on purpose, on the other hand, if we judge from what the verbs mean, we can figure out obvious differences between them. In dictionary (2012), "rush", as a verb, can be explained as "If you rush somewhere, you go there quickly." and "If people rush to do something, they do it as soon as they can, because they are very eager to do it." It suggests a sense of hurry and eagerness in spite of the rapidity. While "flit", defined as "If something such as a bird or a bat flits about, it flies quickly from one place to another." in dictionary, seldom implies the meaning of "hurry".

Thus, even both of them follow the result-oriented principle, Giles's version reveals more hidden meanings and is more specific.

Resulted Orientation of Sentences

1- Sentences of Procedure

Chinese people are likely to describe the procedure in a continuous way with the application of a series of verbs. While English people prefers to find a final end of actions and changes the whole sentence into "Subject+ Verb+ Object" structure.

Case 1:

适**赴**金华，**至**北郭，**解**装兰若。	
Herbert Giles	Minford
Happening to go to Chinhua, he **took shelter** in a temple to the north of the city;	Once he **passed** through Jinhua on his travels and **rested** for a while at a temple in the northern outskirts of the city.

In Chinese, there are many sentences describing a whole series of action process which contains more than one verb. To translate it, the translator must first confirm the main verb of the whole sentence. For example, in this sentence, we can find three verbs "赴", "至" and "解". The first verb "赴" suggests a tendency, and the second verb "至" indicates the end of his journey, while the third verb "解" is the final result of his series of actions.

In Herbert Giles's, there is only one main verb "took shelter", and both "赴" and "至" are changed into either an Adverbial Clause or a preposition. It clearly presents the subject and gives readers the result. While in Minford's translation, he just talks about the whole journey with two verbs "passed" and "rested", which is coordinating and shows no resulted-orientation.

For this reason, Herbert Giles's translation is more advancing.

Let's see another example.

Case 2:

起，伏北壁石窗下微**窥**之，见短墙外一小院落，有妇可四十余;又一媪**衣**(yì)绯，插蓬沓，鲐背龙钟，偶**语**月下。	
Herbert Giles	Minford
Getting up, he **peeped** through a window, and **saw**, in a small courtyard the other side of a low wall, a woman of about forty with an old maid-servant in a long faded gown, humped-backed and feeble-looking. They **were chatting** by the light of the moon,	Rising from his bed, he **crouched** against the northern wall of his cell, beneath the stone window-frame, and, peeping out, **saw** a sma1l courtyard surrounded by a low wall, in which two women-one in her forties, the other an old lady in a faded red dress, with a1ong silver comb in her hair, humpbacked and unsteady on her feet— **were talking** in the moonlight.

First of all, it is obvious that the translation of Herbert Giles of this sentence is shorter than that of Minford, which means the former may be more compressed.

Second, in the Chinese text, there are eight verbs in one single sentence, informing its reader the whole procedure of Ning Caichen's action of peeping and what he sees. While in English version, the number of main verbs is reduced to three. Herbert Giles uses "peep", "see" and "are chatting" and divides the whole sentence into two parts. Minford applies "crouch", "see" and "are talking".

According to the context, this sentence actually wants to stress the result that Ning sees something rather than how he manages to see it or whether he sees a woman or man. The main verbs "peep" and "see" in Herbert Giles's translation not only provide a sense of continuity but also guide reader to a final scene. Minford, also picks up main verbs though, doesn't recognize that "crouch" is what Ning does rather than the result of his action.

In this sense, Herbert Giles's translation is more result-oriented.

Case 3:

宁**欲观**之。**慨出**相示，荧荧然一小剑也。于是益**厚重**燕。	
Herbert Giles	Minford
At Ning's request he **produced** the weapon, a bright little miniature of a sword; and from that time Ning **held** his friend in higher esteem than ever.	Ning **gazed** in wonder at the dazzling little miniature sword, and from that moment on **held** his fellow-lodger in great awe.

In Chinese version, it is a continuous process, showing from Ning's request, to Yan's agreement, Sword's appearance and in the end, Ning's changed attitude. While English combines multiple results.

In this case, the Chinese expression "欲观之", with two verbs "欲" and "观"， is actually an expression of Ning Caichen's thoughts, which is a mental activity. It belongs to the process part and if we translate in a literal way, it should be "want to see". "慨出相示" contains two actions, namely, "take the sword" out and "show it to Ning". The action is on the premise that Ning wants to see it and the final purpose of actions is to "show it". Thus, the focus of the first three sentences should be the action of Yan rather than that of Ning. In English version, Minford directly uses "gazed in wonder at" to indicate that the companion has already taken the sword out and show it to Ning Caichen. It reduces the process of showing the companion the sword. And in Herbert Giles' translation, "欲观之" is directly converted into "Ning's request", which omits the process of Ning Caichen's request, and jumps directly to the result that the companion takes out the sword.

For the last sentence, the subject of "益厚重燕" is Ning Caichen. "于是" here leads to the result, but "益厚" actually shows a process from paying general attention to treat with sincerity. For this sentence, both translators used "hold" to suggest the result.

The above Chinese sentences are process-oriented though some of them still mention the result of a series of actions. While in English, we can see, the result are more prominent, especially in Giles's translation.

Case 4:

既约同宿，辞以性癖耽寂。宁不听，强携卧具来。燕不得已，移榻从之，……	
Herbert Giles	Minford
Yen declined, on the ground that he liked being by himself; but Ning wouldn't hear any excuses, and carried all Yen's things to his own room, **so that** he had no alternative but to consent.	**At first** Yan refused, saying that he was a creature of habit and much too accustomed to sleeping alone. **In the end**, Ning was **so** persistent (going so far as to carry his own bedding over to Yan's room) **that** Yan felt obliged to comply with his request, **and** made room for him.

In this case, the Chinese expression is quite fluent in the description of the whole process, and presents a continuous scene. However, in English, a large number of conjunctions are used, such as "so that", "At first", "In the end", etc., to indicate the boundaries. There are many content words in the original text. Like the "不得已，移榻从之", it shows actions by content words. "移榻" and "从之" actually express the similar meaning but present a continuous action picture.

When dealing with "不得已，移榻从之", both translations show the meaning of "不得已", but adopt different expressions for the the subsequent process of taking action because of such "不得已". The first translation condenses it as "he had no alternative but to consent", and the word "consent" indicates the final result. Although the second translation is translated in accordance with the original format, the expression "felt obliged to comply" is adopted and "移榻从之" is directly translated into "and made room for him", which is actually the action to show his consent.

2- Sentences of Inquiry

Also, the change of sentence type can sometimes show the resulted- orientation.

In the original Chinese version of *Nie Xiaoqian*, there are 185 sentences in total if we judge a period, exclamation mark or interrogation mark as the symbols of the end of one sentence. In Giles's version, there are 129 sentences among which 123 sentences are ended with ".", 4 sentences with "?"and 2 sentences with "!". In Minford's version, there are 250 sentences among which 223 sentences are ended with "." , 7 sentences with "?" and 20 sentences with "!". As shown below in the table:

Numbers	*Nie Xiaoqian*	Giles's version	Minford's version
ended with "."	168	123	223
ended with "?"	10	4	7
ended with "!"	7	2	20
In Total	185	129	250

In some cases, inquiry sentences will be transferred into a declarative one to express the core meaning. Evidently, we can see that the number of the Chinese inquiry sentences is reduced in both English versions. The changed form is actually a suggestion of "resulted orientation" of English.

Case 1:

又问:"迷人若何?"	
Herbert Giles	Minford
Ning then inquired how the spirits worked.	"Tell me something," he said. "Tell me how you set about bewitching men."

This is Ning's question to Nie Xiaoqian, inquiring the method how she lures people. Herbert Giles converts the interrogative sentence into a declarative sentence, which, according to Wang Jianguo's theory, is more advanced than Minford.

Case 2:

女曰："儿实无二心。泉下人既不见信于老母，请以兄事，依高堂，奉晨昏，**如何?**"	
Herbert Giles	Minford
"**I have but one motive in what I ask**," answered Hsiao-ch'ien, "and if you have no faith in disembodied people then let me regard him as my brother, and live under your protection, serving you like a daughter."	"Truly I wish him no harm," replied the girl. "If you do not trust me, because I am a spirit from the Nether World, then let me serve him as a sister. That would also a1low me to wait upon you, morning and evening, as a daughter."

In this example, we can see that the Chinese version contains an inquiry sentence "如何" which is used to ask the opinion of Ning Caichen's mother. It is not simply a question but instead a persuasion method in Chinese dialogue. The expected answer of this question is quite clear. While in English, both translators change the sentence type.

Herbert Giles condenses the whole sentence as the request of Nie Xiaoqian. He combines "儿实无二心" with "如何" in a short sentence "I have but one motive in what I ask" at the beginning as the topic part of the whole sentence. The latter directly omitted the inquiry and cannot show the attitude of Nie and the purpose of this conversation. From this point, Herbert Giles figures the meaning of the sentence and expresses in a more explicit way. Thus, it is better.

Conclusion
When the translator is doing CE translation, he must bear in mind the orientation differences of Chinese and English, that is, Chinese is process-oriented and English resulted-oriented. To make it, the translator may condense a series of actions described in Chinese into one single English verb, combine adjectives with actions and reduce them into adverbs or verbs, adjust the interrogative sentences to express the core meaning explicitly and so on.

In view of this feature, though Minford also chooses some resultative words in some parts, he fails to explain the implications beyond the text. Based on the above analysis, we can draw the conclusion that Herbert Giles's translation does better in conclusion and shows more resulted orientation in verbs, adjectives as well as the sentence transformation.

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