

The Variation of the Black Image in Hei Nu Yu Tian Lu from the Skopos Theory

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ARTICLE INFORMATION

Received: May 25, 2021

Accepted: June 11, 2021

Volume: 4

Issue: 6

DOI: 10.32996/ijllt.2021.4.6.26

ABSTRACT

Lin Shu, who does not comprehend English, translated roughly 170 foreign novels. His second translation Hei Nu Yu Tian Lu (Uncle Tom's Cabin), has influenced Chinese translation history and modern writers. Many Chinese Scholars has studied Hei Nu Yu Tian Lu before, but no works are studying the variation of the black image in Hei Nu Yu Tian Lu. This paper explains how the black image varies from the black slave to the Chinese literary slave after translation based on skopos theory.

KEYWORDS

Hei Nu Yu Tian Lu; Uncle Tom's Cabin; Skopos theory; the variation of the black image

1. Introduction

The Skopos theory that Hans J. Vermeer puts forward belongs to a translation theory in Germany in the late 1970s. The Greek term *skopós* means "purpose" or "aim". From that time, we use the purpose of the term, aim, and skopos as synonyms. Vermeer claimed that translation studies should not rely solely on linguistics because the translation was not merely or even mainly a linguistic process, and linguistics failed to truly resolve the problems in translation. As such, he put forward the Skopos theory based on the theory of action (N. Zhang, 2004). In a word, "A translational action is governed by its purpose" (Reiss, 2013:85). Nord also noted that any action is purposeful (Nord, 2014). Vermeer divided translation purposes into three categories: (1) the personal purpose of translators; (2) the expected purposes of a TT; and (3) the purposes of translation strategies or approaches. Based on that, Vermeer noted three vital rules for Skopos Theory: the skopos principle, the coherence principle and the fidelity principle. Skopos principle is the highest rule among them: an action is determined by its purpose (Reiss, 2013:90). The coherence rule means that the source text can be understood after translated into the target language. We can also say that the translator conforms to the recipient and relates the source text to the situation of target language readers. Since translation is to provide information based on the given information, it is expected to have a certain relationship with the corresponding ST. This relationship is called the fidelity rule. This type of coherence is determined by the translator's understanding of the source text (after consulting the source-text producer, if necessary) and by the skopos governing the *translatum* (Reiss, 2013:102). As in Skopos Theory, the translator translates the source text according to his aims so that the translation product may change due to the translators' alternation in the source text.

Lin Shu, a Chinese litterateur, produced more than 170 Chinese titles, mainly English and French novels. *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, a famous American novel, was firstly translated by Lin Shu into China. Consequently, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and its translation are of vital importance in Chinese translation history. Lin Shu's first translation is *The Lady of the Camellias* whose translated name is Cha Hua Nv Yi Shi. As we all know, *The Lady of the Camellias* narrates a miserable love story. And why Lin Shu chose *Uncle Tom's Cabin* a strongly political novel, as his second translated novel after translating a love story? And did he change the image of the Black in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*? The next three chapters follow.

2. Analysis of the Variation of the Black Image Based on Skopos Rule

(1) Source text: *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

Target text: 《黑奴吁天录》

The title *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is commonly called “汤姆叔叔的小屋”(Tang Mu Shu Shu de Xiao Wu). But Lin Shu did not translate it into “汤姆叔叔的小屋”(Tang Mu Shu Shu de Xiao Wu) but “黑奴吁天录”(Hei Nu Yu Tian Lu). In 1901, China was invaded by the Eight-Nation Alliance when China has gone through a semi-feudal semi-colonial society. Lin Shu realized that it was time to wake up Chinese people to fight against the foreign invaders. As a result, Lin Shu translated the title purposefully. If Lin Shu had translated the title “汤姆叔叔的小屋” literally, the readers could lose interest in this novel when taking the book in his hand.

On the contrary, if translated into “黑奴吁天录”(Hei Nu Yu Tian Lu), Chinese readers could know the main content of the novel and aroused their spirit. This is the reason why the translated version was sold about 300,000 copies a year. Besides, once the miserable Chinese took this novel and saw the translated title, they could think of such a scene: a black slave without any freedom in shackles knelt on the ground and asked God: Why is our fate so unfair? Are we black slaves born to be slaughtered lambs that have lost freedom? When will we be free? Lin Shu successfully shaped a more miserable black image than one in the source language.

(2) Source text:

from pages 20 to 29, the author totally uses the 9 pages roughly 5000 words to depict the harmonious scene of George and the Black slaves. However, Lin Shu left 87 words in the target text.

Target text:

“解而培夫妇仁爱，克鲁夫妇亦欢聚，有天伦之乐。汤姆常受学于主人之子名乔治者，所以稍能读书。乔治亦甚昵之，不以常奴齿。一日傍晚，汤姆为邻人延饮，宾主歌呼，方极酣嬉，而丧败意致之事至矣。”((Lin Shu, Wei Yi, 1981:13))

Lin Shu condensed 8 pages' content nearly 5000 English words into 87 Chinese characters. He employed an omission strategy on purpose to reduce the harmonious scenes between the black and the white in the target text so that the misery of the black image is strengthened in the target text. Its purpose governs any translational action. Intending to cheer up Chinese people, Lin Shu omitted the target text properly to highlight the painful black slave in the translated version.

3. Analysis of the Variation of the Black Image Based on Coherence Rule

(1) Source text:

What! our Tom? —that good, faithful creature! —been your faithful servant from a boy! O, Mr. Shelby! —and you have promised him his freedom, too —you and I have spoken to him a hundred times of it. Well, I can believe anything now —I can believe now that you could sell little Harry, poor Eliza's only child!" said Mrs. Shelby, in a tone between grief and indignation(Stowe,1995:15).

Target text:

爱密柳骇然曰：“汤姆事吾极忠，今乃亦在遣中！且君少时，汤姆已事君。君尝曰：‘当令汤姆脱奴籍，今既卖汤姆，然则意里赛之言又似实矣’。”言矣，大忿。(Lin Shu, Wei Yi, 1981:14)

“good ” and “faithful” are translated into “忠”. “忠” has been an important element in the traditional Chinese culture of Confucianism. It emphasizes the relationship between the emperor and ministers. Especially, ministers must be loyal to their emperor, which consolidated Chinese feudalism. In Lin Shu's translation, he mentions “忠” and “忠义”for several times. Consequently, the Black Image has turned into a traditional Chinese servant of great loyalty. The Black slave does not only believe in God but also embrace traditional Confucianism. The black image in the source language has changed after translated into China.

(2) Source text:

and, in splendour inconceivable, he saw that same face bending compassionately towards him, and a voice said, “He that overcometh shall sit down with me on my throne, even as I also overcome, and am set down with my Father on his throne.” (Stowe,1995:362)

Target text:

巨人以手扶之，慈祥之气，扑人眉宇语汤姆曰：“凡人于痛苦流血之时，能坚其道力，此人弥足有为。” (Lin Shu, Wei Yi, 1981:187)

In the source text, “throne” means the position of being a king or queen, which represents a symbol of western monarchy’s power, in Chinese, we translate it to “王冠” or “王位”. However, there is no similar Chinese Character in the target language. Lin Shu uses free translation, and more encouraging words were created, which encouraged Chinese people to cheer up.

4. Analysis of the Variation of the Black Image Based on Fidelity Rule

(1) Source text:

“Why, wife, you are getting to be an abolitionist, quite.”

“Abolitionist! if they knew all I know about slavery, they might

talk! We don’t need them to tell us; you know I never thought that

slavery was right—never felt willing to own slaves.” “Well, therein you differ from many wise and pious men,” said Mr. Shelby. (Stowe, 1995:33)

Target text:

解而培曰：“尔竟欲不畜奴耶？吾俗谓不畜奴者，异端耳。国俗如是，乌能不畜。” (Lin Shu, Wei Yi, 1981:15)

Fidelity mainly focuses on intertextual coherence that is determined by the translator’s understandings of the source text. In other words, the translator translated for the coherent transfer of a source text under different circumstances. At that time, the Chinese public did not know the foreign slavery. If Lin Shu translated into “奴隶制” in Chinese, Poor Chinese did not comprehend the word “奴隶制” so the promotional effect of inspiring civilian population is reduced with people’s less information about slavery. Besides, he translates “own” to “畜” in Chinese that often means raising animals. When reading the chapter, Chinese readers could associate themselves with the miserable black slave. Consequently, common people could remind of the tough situation of China.

(3) Source text:

“Get in!” said Haley to Tom, as he strode through the crowd of servants, who looked at him with lowering brows. Tom got in, and Haley, drawing out a heavy pair of shackles from under the wagon seat, made them fast around each ankle. A smothered groan of indignation ran through the whole circle, and Mrs. Shelby spoke from the verandah, — “Mr. Haley, I assure you that precaution is entirely unnecessary.” (Stowe, 1995:92)

Target text:

海留指其所坐之车，麾汤姆上，海留亦继上，取脚镣一，械汤姆。克鲁观之，肝肺咸裂，声嘶而急。“君万勿尔，此奴不逃也。” (Lin Shu, Wei Yi, 1981:15)

There is no Chloe’s perspective in the source text, but a third-person narration is added in the target language. The third-person narration is focalized internally. Lin Shu added a third-person narrative in his translation where the story world sees through the eyes of the character of Chloe. Through the perspective of Chloe the misery of the black slave Tom is enhanced. Besides, the words “肝肺咸裂，声嘶而急” in Chinese means a person’s heart is broken to its climax so that his lung and liver were broken and he shouts in a cracked voice. In other words, the image of the black in the point of Lin Shu is strengthened, it becomes more miserable. The third-person narration inspires more confidence in their information and views and often deploy third-person narration throughout.

5. Conclusion

Lin Shu succeeded in portraying an oppressed and bullied black slave who practised Christianity into a cowardly Chinese civilian whom Confucianism influenced, aroused the patriotism of the people, and devoted himself to the struggle against imperialism and feudalism. Mr. Lin Shu’s translation of “Black Slaves Calling the Sky” caused a huge sensation in society and achieved great success, which made people not even think about the reasons. It is precisely because Lin Shu deliberately used appropriate translation strategies to reconstruct the cultural identity of black slaves during the translation process, making it conform to the

taste of the Chinese civilians at the time, arousing their resonance, inspiring people's patriotism, and rising up to resist to achieve the goal of saving the country and protecting Chinese people.

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