

# A Comparative Study of the Titles in the Contents Table of 'Educated' in Mainland China and Taiwan——from the Cross-cultural Perspective

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**Abstract:** In the globalized literary landscape, the art of translation intricately navigates linguistic, cultural, and contextual nuances. This study presents a comprehensive analysis of title translations in the contents table of Tara Westover's book "Educated," comparing the versions for Mainland China and Taiwan. We scrutinize the impacts of domestication, foreignization, communicative, and semantic translation strategies on ten distinct titles. Through this analysis, we unearth how linguistic differences, cultural nuances, and geographical influences shape the translators' choices. This comparative exploration sheds light on how the balance between preserving authenticity and adapting to cultural contexts is achieved, reaffirming translation's pivotal role as a bridge between diverse literary landscapes.

**Keywords:** Comparative Study; Translated Titles; Educated; Mainland China; Taiwan; Cross-Cultural Translation

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## 1. Introduction

In the realm of literary translation, the transfer of titles from one language and culture to another emerges as a complex endeavor that involves delicate linguistic finesse and cultural acumen. This study embarks on a comprehensive journey into the translated titles found within the contents table of Tara Westover's compelling work, "Educated." The focus of our exploration is a meticulous comparison between the Mainland China and Taiwan versions, shedding light on how the unique linguistic, cultural, and contextual landscapes of each region interact with the intricate web of translation strategies. Through this analysis, we seek to unravel the intricate dance between domestication and foreignization, communicative and semantic translation strategies, and their harmonious interplay with cultural dynamics. This investigation promises to provide valuable insights into the profound art of cross-cultural translation, highlighting the role of titles as gateways that bridge the literary dimensions of different worlds.

## 2. Methodology

The author analyzes all ten titles in the contents table, scrutinizing how linguistic and cultural differences, geographical influences, and educational and cultural nuances are portrayed in the translations. This exploration is underpinned by an examination of domestication and foreignization strategies, as well as communicative and semantic translation techniques.

## 3. Case Analysis of Some Representative Examples

### 3.1 Linguistic and Cultural Differences

As we traverse the contents, the titles whisper tales of linguistic and cultural disparities. A poignant example is the title "The Midwife (P18 of Part One)." Ren Aihong, in her Mainland China version, skillfully employs domestication with "助产士" (Midwife), seamlessly integrating the term with local language. Lin Shiqi's Taiwan rendition, "產婆" (Birth Attendant), resonates with foreignization, capturing nuances unique to the Taiwanese linguistic realm. This illustrates how translation choices bridge gaps between linguistic conventions and cultural familiarity.

### 3.2 Geographical Disparities

Geographical influences paint strokes of divergence in translation. In "Silence in the Churches(P131 of Part One)" Ren Aihong's domesticated approach "沉默的教堂" (Silent Churches) reverberates with the religious landscape in Mainland China. Contrastingly, Lin Shiqi's choice of "閉口不言" (Remaining Silent) employs a foreignizing strategy that extends beyond the walls of churches, capturing broader interpretations more relevant to Taiwanese cultural contexts. This divergence underscores how geographical positioning shapes translation strategies.

### 3.3 Educational and Cultural Nuances

Educational and cultural spectra also play pivotal roles in translation strategies. "Educated(P375 of Part Three)," the crux of the narrative, takes on distinct hues. Ren Aihong's "教育" (Education) gravitates towards communication, encapsulating the broader concept.

In Taiwan's context, Lin Shiqi's "受過教育" (Being Educated) exudes semantic richness, reflecting the island's emphasis on the experiential facets of education. This juxtaposition showcases the intricate connection between translation and educational-cultural paradigms.

## 3.4 Other Examples

### 3.4.1 "Honest Dirt" (P50 of Part One)

Both versions emphasize honesty. Ren Aihong's "诚实的污垢" (Honest Dirt) remains communicative. Lin Shiqi's "老實苦幹的髒汗" (Hardworking Filth) employs a semantically-rich approach that captures colloquial nuances, offering insight into cultural differences in expressions of honesty. "Dirt" here refers to the dirty hands of Tara's father and "Honest" means that her father is a diligent man with integrity. As he always said in the novel "My hands are dirty but they're honest dirt." Possibly "Honest Dirt" is a special tag of Tara's father who devoted all his life to the scrapping. In light of this point, both of the two versions partially embodies Tara's father's personality.

### 3.4.2 "Silence in the Churches" (P131 of Part One)

Ren Aihong's "沉默的教堂" (Silent Churches) is domesticated. In contrast, Lin Shiqi's "閉口不言" (Remaining Silent) employs foreignization, potentially highlighting broader interpretations beyond religious contexts, influenced by cultural and linguistic disparities. The latter version adopts communicative translation method and has a better interaction with the original text in which part Tara chose to be silent when their father asked her about Tylor's absence on the scrapping. Here in this example Lin's version seems to be more appropriate in light of the correlation to the original text.

### 3.4.3 "In the Beginning" (P195 of Part Two)

"回到原点" (Returning to the Starting Point) by Ren Aihong is communicatively translated and domesticated, which emphasizes that everything began to come back to what it used to be. Here in Ren's version the nominal phrase is transformed into verbal phrase. By contrast, Lin Shiqi's "起初" (Beginning) employs foreignization and literal translation method and seems a little weak in conveying the author's intention implied in this part.

### 3.4.4 "Waiting for the Moving Water"(P258 of Part Two)

Both versions are relatively neutral, but Ren Aihong's "静候水流" (Waiting for the Water Flow) remains domesticated. Lin Shiqi's "等待水動" (Waiting for Water Movement) may be influenced by cultural distinctions in expressing anticipation. Ren's version better connects to the novel's main contents in Part Two, depicting that Tara's badly-injured father couldn't move because of the terrible explosion, just weakly lying in bed and hopelessly waiting for things to become better.

### 3.4.5 "The Substance of Things"(P328 of Part Three)

Both versions are notably similar. Ren Aihong's "事物的本质" (Essence of Things) remains to be communicative and Lin Shiqi's "事物的實底" (Substance of Things) reflects a preference for slightly more abstract phrasing. The word "實底" originates from ancient Chinese, which means the true reality of things. There's no absolute distinction between the two versions but minor nuances due to different linguistic using habits.

### 3.4.6 "Watching the Buffalo" (P367 of Part Three)

Ren Aihong's "守望野牛" (Guarding the Wild Buffalo) adopts the method of literal translation, which leans to domestication. While Lin Shiqi's "公主"(Princess) is aligning with the nick name of "Buck's Peak" given by the Tara's father: "the Indian Princess", which is also a symbol of Tara's hometown and her father's authority. Taking this into account, compared with Ren's version, Lin's communicative version of free translation better resonates with the original text.

## 4. Conclusion

Through the comprehensive comparative analysis of Ren and Lin's translated versions, a vivid panorama of translation strategies and cultural influences emerges. Ren's translations, characterized by their preference for domestication and communicative strategies, mirror the harmonious resonance with Mainland China's cultural tapestry. In contrast, Lin's deliberate embrace of foreignization and semantic translation embodies the unique linguistic and cultural cadence of Taiwan.

This comparative exploration accentuates the transformative power of translation, revealing how the linguistic interplay extends beyond mere words. The titles, distilled through the prism of translation, become more than mere descriptors; they evolve into resonant conduits, bridging the gaps between cultures and inviting readers to embark on a journey of literary exploration. Each translated title

unveils the delicate dance of cross-cultural communication, where linguistic nuances harmonize with cultural idiosyncrasies.

In essence, this study illuminates that translation is not merely a linguistic transaction, but a nuanced intermingling of cultures, ideologies, and narratives. The titles within the contents table, imbued with the vitality of translation, transcend their textual confines to offer readers a glimpse into the complexities of cross-cultural coexistence. Ultimately, this comparative study serves as a testament to the intricate choreography of translation, where words are choreographed into a symphony that resonates across boundaries, evoking understanding and appreciation in its wake.

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