

A Report on the E-C Translation of Walden (Excerpt)

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Abstract: This report mainly analyzes the difficulties from the lexical, syntactic and textual perspectives and put forward to the corresponding solution based on the E-C translation practice of the Walden. The author tried to translate it into the classical Chinese. This translation report can be divided into four parts. The first part is the introduction of the background, the significance of the task, the source text and the authors. Part two is the case analysis. the translator mainly analyzes the key difficulties during the translation from lexical, syntactic and textual perspectives. The third part is the summary of the translation task involving gains from the translation practice and deficiencies and possible improvements of the task. The last part is conclusion.

Keywords: Walden; Literature Translation; Translation Methods; Classical Chinese

1. Introduction

On the one hand, there are more and more pollution damaging our environment, such as exhaust gas from cars. Moreover, most of people tend to pursue the busy and challenge life of metropolis, which brings a lot of pressure and unhappiness to them. On the other hand, China is devoting itself to promote Chinese traditional culture nowadays. Using the classical Chinese is a good way to remember our traditional culture. Walden, one of the most influential works in American literature, shows people a comfortable life in village. Its spirit is a great fortune for today's people.

In recent years, as mounting passion of the public for Walden, more and more Chinese versions published by an increasing number of publishers are appearing in the market. However, there are only a small number of published academic papers which are related to the study of the translations of Walden, and, moreover, only four of those papers are about Walden's Chinese translations from the perspective of reception theory, which is a strange phenomenon compared with readers' fervent interests in Walden. What is worth more noting is that there is still no relevant study on the specific translation strategies of Walden, let alone translate it from English to the classical Chinese. The E-C translation of Walden can promote Chinese's understanding of western transcendentalism, strengthen people's awareness of the usage of the classical Chinese, as well as stimulate people's love towards nature.

As a result, the author chose the fourth chapter to translate.

2. Case Analysis

2.1 Lexical Perspective

Some words in the source text are difficult to translate, for the reason of cultural differences, such as some trees' names and some other words that refer to a group of people. As a result, the translator choose to use the strategy of free translation. Only in this way can the readers of translation understand the true meaning of the author.

Example 1:

Source Text: pines, hickories, sumachs

Translation: 青山绿树

Analysis: A pine tree or a pine is a tall tree that has very thin, sharp leaves called needles and a fresh smell. Pine trees have leaves all year round. A hickory is a tree which has large leaves, greenish flowers, and nuts with smooth shells. a shrub

or tree of the genus *Rhus* (usually limited to the non-poisonous members of the genus). From the analysis of the context, it can be seen that these three words are to describe the author's leisurely feeling in love with the landscape. The translation of three different words does not affect the expression of this idea, so the three words can be combined into the same word. On the one hand, "青山绿树" refers to the beautiful sights with many trees, which conforms to the source text. On the other hand, the four-character structure used frequently in the classical Chinese can fully embody the characteristics and charm of Chinese.

Example 2:

Source Text: alert

Translation: 衽金革、甄心动惧

Analysis: "Alert" is a noun here and it refers to a condition of heightened watchfulness or preparation for action. Both "衽金革" and "甄心动惧" are actions, used to describe that someone remains vigilant at all times. If just using the literal translation and translating it to "处于警惕之中", not only readers may feel confused, for it doesn't conform to their habits, but also can it be too tedious.

2.2 Syntactic Perspective

2.2.1 Long Sentences

The long sentence in Chinese refers to the sentence with more words, multi-level semantics and complex structure. Generally, there are two types of long sentences. For the first type, the internal components of the sentence have complex components, rich content and detailed statement. For the second type, the sentence is a compound sentence which clearly demonstrates the logical relationship between each component. Therefore, the translator selected examples of long sentences in this report.

Example 3:

Source Text: But while we are confined to books, though the most select and classic, and read only particular written languages, which are themselves but dialects and provincial, we are in danger of forgetting the language which all things and events speak without metaphor, which alone is copious and standard.

Translation: 书中精品，亦为殊言别语。他者去饰无雕琢，亦可言尽万意，唯其种类极丰，亦最正也。然若吾辈囿于书，则阻于遗他者之险隘。

Analysis: If the source text is translated as a single long English sentence, the text hierarchy and key points will be unclear. Therefore, the translator divided the three parts by sense group: the first part serves as the statement of books, one of the written language, which is treated as a single sentence to maintain integrity of the meaning; the second part talks about the other kind of language; the last part illustrates that we shouldn't only confined to books but devote ourselves to practice. The splitting translation method was employed first. Splitting translation is to split the source sentence into two or more shorter sentences. The structure of Chinese sentence is usually loose, and some clauses can express complete meaning; the structure of English sentence is relatively compact, so it is necessary to express the logical relations within the sentences clearly. Therefore, the translator should analyze carefully the relationship between clauses in Chinese sentences and then split them according to English expression habits.

Example 4:

Source Text: Sometimes, in a summer morning, having taken my accustomed path, I sat in my sunny doorway from sunrise till noon, rapt in a reverie, amidst the pines and hickories and sumachs, in undisturbed solitude and stillness, while the birds sang around or flitted noiseless through the house, until by the sun falling in at my west window, or the noise of some traveler's wagon on the distant highway, I was reminded of the lapse of time.

Translation: 或时，夏日之晨，踱常行之道，静坐于门前，自日出至午时。适时，阳光明媚，禽鸟或歌、或掠屋于无声之中。于青山绿树之间，吾专于空想，全神贯注，与世隔绝，心无旁骛。直至日落西窗，抑或闻道上游者车马之喧，吾方觉逝。

Analysis: The best way to deal with the long sentences is to divide it into several sentences. Normally, classical Chinese first outlines the background of the event, then narrates the writer, and finally summarizes the main idea. As a result, the translator divides the sentence according to this rule. The first part is to illustrate what “I” often do in the village; the second part describes the picturesque sights, the third part expresses the author’s thought when he is immersed into the environment, and the last part is to sublimate the main idea that he is willing to enjoy the comfortable life.

2.2.2 Parallel Sentences

Parallel sentence is often used in the source texts so that it made the language elaborate, the rhyme and rhythm harmonious, tones convincing, and touching and moving in emotions. However, it is not easy to realize it in the classical Chinese. The translator tries to retain the effect of parallel sentences as well as considering each short sentences’ length by using four-character idiom.

Example 5:

Source Text: What is a course of history or philosophy, or poetry, no matter how well selected, or the best society, or the most admirable routine of life, compared with the discipline of looking always at what is to be seen?

Translation: 经史哲学，妙选诗词，鸿均之世，抑或是闲云野鹤，何能及未卜先知之准则也？

Analysis: This sentence is a typical parallel sentence. The translator carefully thought over the sentence structure when translating it into English and the usage of specific words. The author combines “history” and “philosophy”, translating it as “经史哲学”, transfers “no matter how well selected” into an adjective “妙选”, uses “鸿均之世” to replace “the best society” and “闲云野鹤” to substitute “the most admirable routine of life”. In this way, not only the translation is faithful to the original sentence, but also meets the structure of the classical Chinese. Moreover, from the perspective of rhythm, “词” and “世” is rhyming, it improves the beauty of sounds.

2.3 Textual Perspective

Although both English and Chinese have subject-verb-object structures, English word order and sentence structure are more flexible. A translator should have text awareness, that is, he should integrate the translation of words and sentences into the text.

Example 6:

Source Text: No method nor discipline can supersede the necessity of being forever on the alert.

Translation: 永衽金革、甄心动惧，至关重要，古今训习，无可代替。

Analysis: In English, the most important information often is put at the beginning of the sentence while in Chinese, it is contrary. The focus of the example 8 is “No method nor discipline”, so when translated into classical Chinese, this part should be moved to the later part.

3. Summary

Most of the practical translation materials in this practice are related to Chinese culture, so difficulties are obvious. However, as a graduate student majoring in English translation, the quality of translation must be guaranteed. When the translator translated the source text, the most important thing was to grasp the connotation. And in the process of translation practice, the translators’ ability to translate has been significantly improved. In this translation practice, the translator firstly guaranteed the accuracy of the translation, which are both the lowest standard and the highest standard for a translator. Secondly, on the premise of ensuring the accuracy of the translation, the translator pursued smoothness and naturalness of the translation as well as the literary talent, which is also the highest standard that the translator pursues.

4. Conclusion

Based on the E-C translation practice of the Walden, this report mainly analyzes the difficulties from the lexical, syntactic and textual perspectives and put forward to the corresponding solution. In a word, when coming across these difficulties, the translator searches information as more as she can, divides the long sentences into two or several shorter

sentences, maintains the effect parallel sentences, pays attention to the logic relationship between sentences and paragraphs and adjust the words order as necessary.

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