The Translator's Subjectivity in Light of Geroge·Steiner's Fourfold Translation Motion Theory

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Abstract: Under the influence of the binary epistemological philosophy, the traditional translation theories tend to be author-centered or writer-centered, which gave the inviolable priority to the source text and the first-hand writers. The advent of "cultural turn" witnessed the change of translation subjects from unitary to multiplicity. Translation was not only a transition between languages, but also a human act in the time context of works. Therefore, in the process of translating, translators should comprehend the historical and cultural background of the works and the authors and much more emphasis should be put on translators' subjectivity. This paper will analyze translators' roles in fourfold steps and the ways to improve the translation quality by bringing translators' subjective initiatives into full play.

Key words: Trust, Aggression, Incorporation, Compensation, Subjectivity, Translation Hermeneutics.

1. Introduction

"The traditional view of translation considers translation as a subordinate act of literary creation, opposing the relationship between the original author and the translator to that of master and servant. This view ignores the subjective initiative of the translator and emphasizes that the translator should be faithful to the original author and the translation must be a copy of the original work. This obliterates the translator's subject and subjectivity "(Lu Jun, Hou Xiangqun, 2005:236). In 1975, George Steiner, a British theorist, published After the Tower of Babel: Perspectives on Language and Translation. He proposed that "understanding is translation", which pointed out that language is always in a dynamic state of change, and translation activities consistently run through the diachronic and synchronic phenomena of language. That is, all communication and communication are achieved through translation or interpretation (steiner, 2001:315). In this process, the translator is not only the reader and interpreter of the source language, but also the re-creator of the target language. As Roscommon once said, "In the process of translation, the translator and the author should establish a symbiosis, the two are no longer separate individuals, but mysterious and joyful unity" (Earl of Roscommon, 1633-1685). Therefore, the translator needs to understand the original author and the text on the one hand, and the target language reader on the other. In this dual role, the translator's role is increasing and permeates every step of the interpretive activity. Therefore, this paper will analyze the translator's participation in the four steps of translation: "trust", "Aggression", "Incorporation" and "compensation", and give different suggestions on how to exert subjectivity and improve the quality of translation in different steps.

2. The translator's subjectivity

"The so-called subjectivity refers to the translator's creative exertion of his subjective consciousness in translation activities. The translator's personal style, ability and quality emerge in the translation through condensation, modification and other ways through the translator's subjective consciousness or subconscious, including the translator's subjective creativity, intentionality and selectivity as well as the translator's manipulation and resistance" (Xu Jun, Murray, 123-125). The creativity of the translator lies in his rebellion and innovation to the original text. The author conveys many intentions or purposes through the text, such as communicative intention, spreading culture, etc. Then the translator can decide according to his own will which text to choose or a certain intention of a certain text. Finally, the translator's manipulation and resistance refer to the fact that the translator may translate for a certain purpose rather than being loyal to the culture and language of the source text, such as adopting a naturalized translation strategy in order to make the target language readers better accept it. Although the translator plays a very powerful role in the translation process, the translator is different from the reader, who appears in his own identity and may misunderstand the author's original meaning, but bear the error of understanding by himself. The translator, on the other hand, speaks as the author. When the target audience reads the translation, the translator's interpretation of the original text will bring to the reader, The translator's wrong understanding of the source text and even the distortion of the historical background will be regarded as the original author's original intention. Therefore, the translator must be responsible to the readers, the original author and the culture when translating.

3. The translator's subjectivity in light of Geroge·Steiner's fourfold translation motion theory

3.1 Trust

Steiner believes that the translator's trust in the text is the first step in any translation process. All understanding and presentation of understanding begin with trust, that is, the translator believes that the work to be translated has something to say and that the text is meaningful. In his book After Babel -- A View of Language and translation, Steiner said, "All understanding and the demonstrative statement of understanding which is translation, starts with an act of trust ". Therefore, any translator in translation hermeneutic activities has a priori trust that there is translational value in literary works, and only in this way can he be motivated to carry out subsequent translations.

Therefore, translators should believe that the texts they choose are meaningful and worthy of translation. In this way, they will not give up easily even if they encounter some difficulties in the translation process. For example, Yan Fu consciously chose books that changed Chinese people's ideas in the 20th century, Lu Xun and Mao Dun chose novels of oppressed nations in Eastern Europe for translation. The translator's participation in the interpretation of "trust" can be seen through the translation of the Analects by James Leges, a British preacher. His translation of the Analects was mainly to convey Chinese culture to the West, make the West understand Chinese culture better and facilitate the Western missionary work in China. The Analects of Confucius is not only a classic of Confucianism, but also a classic of Chinese cultural tradition and one of the cornerstone works of Chinese traditional culture. It carries the profound cultural connotation and philosophical thoughts of China. Therefore, James Li believed in the value of the Analects of Confucius and chose to translate it from his trust in the text.

3.2 Aggression

In the process of expression, the translator's subjective understanding will inevitably invade the original text and transplant the meaning of the original text into the target text. Due to the translator's "pre-understanding", that is, the translator's original cognitive structure, cultural background, psychological structure, knowledge structure, and the influence of the time scale, the translator's understanding of the text cannot be unbiased. Therefore, the translator needs to invade the original text, break the inherent form of the original language, obtain important information from the original text, including deep and shallow meanings, and at the same time try to include a kind of cultural exchange to improve the quality of the translation. In this step, the translator needs to learn more about the source language culture to reduce mistranslations or misinterpretations caused by differences in cultural differences and background knowledge. Delve into the deep and shallow structures of the source language to obtain more accurate information, such as the translation of culture-loaded words and vocatives, to dig out the deep meanings in the source language text. For example, "cabbage" is usually used to describe a dull person in the United States. "He is as stupid as a cabbage" is translated into Chinese as a blockhead. Similarly, through James Legge's English translation of "The Analects of Confucius", let's briefly analyze the translator's participation in this interpretive activity. Since James Legge is British, and his translation of "The Analects of Confucius" contains not only interlingual translation but also intralingual translation, so inevitable biases in understanding are caused in translation. For example, in "Those who do not like to offend against their superiors but are fond of creating disturbances", "offend against their superiors" and "stirring up confusion" are translations. This is due to different understandings caused by cultural differences between China and the West. In China, creating disturbances and offending superiors mainly refer to disobedience to powerful people and disobedience to the royal family. Therefore, due to pre-understanding, different understandings are caused during invasion. Ku Hung-ming's translation of "to disturb the peace and order of the state" is more accurate. Another example is that "At thirty, I stood firm" is James Legge's translation of "At thirty, one should be able to stand on one's own feet and independently take on the responsibilities one should bear." But the meaning in Chinese is that "at the age of 30, one should be able to rely on one's own abilities to independently take on the responsibilities one should bear."

3.3 Incorporation

Based on the previous step, the translator needs to absorb the acquired information, which Steiner divides into the form and meaning of the translator's incorporation of the original text. The translator overcomes the linguistic and cultural barriers and regenerates the unfamiliar and incomprehensible text in the cultural environment of the target language through his own interpretation. Therefore, after the translator "invades" the text according to his own consciousness and understanding, Transfer the meaning and form of the source text into the new culture of the target language. Due to the time distance, differences in the world view and frame of reference between the original author and the translator make the translation activity difficult, but when the difficulty is too great, translation is transformed from an instinctive act into a conscious skill. (Hsu Jun, Murray 93-94). Therefore, different translation strategies are needed in the process of translation to achieve the purpose of translation. At this stage, translators need to have more solid language skills and be skilled in using different translation strategies and skills, such as domestication, foreignization, syntactic operation, sentence recombination, etc., and computer-aided translation can also be used. For example, in the Analects of Confucius, translators need to extract the information from the source language and use different translation strategies to absorb it, because James Li's main motivation for translation is to make Westerners feel the charm of Chinese culture. He mainly adopts foreignization methods for translation, such as translating all the names of Confucius' disciples. For example, Zi Zhang is translated as Tsze-chang instead of all as his disciple like Gu Hongming, or it is compared with Western names, for example, Guan Zhong is translated as Bismarck, in the translation of James Li, Translating "heaven" instead of the Western "God" as in "Feng Bird" was a bird of peace in ancient times, while Li translated it directly as "feng bird" and translate culture-loaded words in a literal way, and improve the target audience's understanding of Chinese culture by annotating and interpreting them.

3.4 Compensation

It is impossible for translators to copy everything from the original text, either by adding and modifying too much, or by deleting too little, which will inevitably cause the translation to lose the original language. Therefore, "compensation" is particularly important. Only in this way can the translator make up for the imbalance in the translation process and be responsible for the translation. In "compensation", the translator can extend the meaning of the word in the translation, add translation, add notes and other ways to exert the subjectivity of the translator to make up for the loss of information in the article, and at the same time delete the redundant information in the article. Therefore, after the end of translation, the translator can check the translated text, make up for its shortcomings, and delete its redundancy. For example, James Li used footnotes to explain the missing information or difficulties in the text. He learned from Wang Tao and Zhu Xi's commentaries

on the Analects to better understand the text. For example, in ancient China, "Yi" is the row of dancing and each row consists of eight men, In ancient China, "Yi" is the row of dancing and each row consists of eight men, which also represents the social statues. (Legge, James 24-25)

Conclusion

Translation of literary works is creative. In literary works, translators need to give full play to their imagination, use knowledge, experience, and aesthetic feelings, and at the same time provide readers with space for fidelity and imagination. All these need to be realized in interpretation activities. Therefore, the translator, as the center of interpretation activities, needs to have a good translation quality and constantly improve the quality of translation. At the same time, it plays a role in the four-step theory, reducing mistranlations and misinterpretations caused by "pre-understanding" and cultural differences, and giving better play to the translator's subjectivity.

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