

Comparative Study of Chinese Translations of *Norwegian Wood*

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Abstract—Although China and Japan are both located in Asian, Chinese is isolating language, while Japanese is agglutinative language. Apart from this difference, there are also differences in culture. Therefore in the translation between the two languages, there are many matters to be noticed. On the basis of the three principles of translation proposed by Chen Yan, this paper takes Lin Shaohua's translation and Lai Mingzhu's translation of the *Norwegian Wood* as the research objects, analyzes the differences of the two translation versions from the perspectives of grammar and culture, hoping to provide some reference for future Japanese-Chinese translation in practice.

Keywords—*Norwegian Wood*; *Chinese translations*; *comparison*

I. INTRODUCTION

All countries and nations in the world express their national characteristics by using language; translation plays a decisive role in the cultural communication of the countries. In the course of development, language of each nation is constantly forming its uniqueness, and this uniqueness is precisely the difficult point in the translation. Since ancient times, there have been many opinions on the theory and standard of translation. Yan Fu put forward "Xin Da Ya (faithfulness, expressiveness and elegance)" theory: "faithfulness" refers to being loyal to the ideological content of the original text and refers to the scientific nature of the translation, excluding the style and rhetorical features of the original work; "expressiveness" means that the translation should use normative language expression and be easy to understand; "elegance" refers to reflecting the life and soul of the translated literary works. Lu Xun (1935) again discussed the standard of translation: "all translations must take care of both sides, strive for to make it easy to understand and preserve the charm of the original work". Fu Lei (1951) put forward "similarity in spirit" theory: "Translation should be judged in effect and should be just as copying a painting, seek for similarity in spirit than the appearance". Qian Zhongshu (1964) said that the highest standard of literary translation is "perfection", and when translating a work from one country's language to another can not only do not reveal the incondition and forced signs because of differences in habits, but also completely preserve the flavor of the original work, which is considered to be perfect. Chen Yan (1999) put forward the three principles of translation: "contrast", "similarity in spirit" and "Chinesization". Based on the

principle of "Chinesization" proposed by Chen Yan, this study compares and analyzes Lin Shaohua's translation and Lai Mingzhu's translation of the famous Japanese writer Haruki Murakami's "Norwegian Wood". Through this study, the characteristics of the Chinese translation of the Japanese literary work are made clear, and the impact of grammatical standards, cultural standards, and translation theories on translation are also determined. Understanding the mode of language expression and cultural expression plays a significant role in understanding Chinese and Japanese cultures. It is expected to support the practical Chinese translation of Japanese literary works.

II. THE CONCEPT AND THEORY OF TRANSLATION

A. Concept

Translation is the act of transforming the information in one language into the information in another language on the basis of ensuring the accuracy, fluency and elegance. Translation is a process of transforming a relatively unfamiliar expression into a relatively familiar expression. Its content includes language, text, graphic, symbol, and video translations. Translation aims to convert language A into language B and translate language B into local language to make local people speaking language B clear about the meaning of language A.

B. Theory

The famous Chinese translator Lin Yutang believed that literary translation should follow the principle of "faithfulness, fluency, and beauty"; Mao Dun thought that the most important artistic color of literary works is the "charm" of the work"; Fu Lei maintained that literary translation should seek for "similarity in spirit"; Qian Zhongshu put forward the "perfection" theory, namely the translation should be both faithful to the original work and not restricted to the original work. Chen Yan put forward three principles of Japanese-Chinese translation: "contrast, similarity in spirit, and Chinesization". The theories and principles of scholars are roughly the same, and they all emphasize to get foreign texts translated into authentic target language. Among the three principles put forward by Chen Yan, "Chinesization" is the most important. Only by realizing true "Chinesization" can Chinese better understand the author's intention and realm. How to achieve the ideal "Chinesization" when translating Japanese literary works,

and what problems should be paid attention to are the problems to be solved in this study.

III. BASIS FOR SELECTION OF CHINESE TRANSLATIONS

Haruki Murakami's "Norwegian Wood" is very popular and has been translated into Chinese by many scholars from mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, as shown in "Table I".

TABLE I. RELEVANT INFORMATION OF MANY TRANSLATIONS OF THE "NORWEGIAN WOOD"

Time	Translator	Publishing house	Place of publication
Feb., 1989	Liu Huizhen, Huang Qiwen, Fu Boning, Huang Cuie, Huang Junhao	Guxiang Publishing House	Taiwan
Jul., 1989	Lin Shaohua	Lijiang Publishing Limited	Mainland China
2001	Lin Shaohua	Shanghai Translation Publishing House	Mainland China
Jun., 1990	Zhong Hongjie	The North Literature and Art Publishing House	Mainland China
May, 1991	Ye Hui	Boyi Publishing Company	Hong Kong
Jun., 1997	Lai Mingzhu	Times culture publishing company	Taiwan
2001	Zhang Bin	Inner Mongolia People's Publishing House	Mainland China
Oct., 2003	Li Ji	Xiyuan Publishing house	Mainland China

Sun Lichun (2012) pointed out as follows: Liu Huizhen, Huang Qiwen, Fu Boning, Huang Cuie and Huang Junhao's translations are lack of uniformity in content; Zhong Hongjie's translation has many errors and is not loyal to the original work so much; Ye Hui's translation has many omissions such as those about wine and music; Zhang Bin and Li Ji's translations are similar to Lin Shaohua's translation and thus are suspected of having theft behavior; thereby, this study selects Lin Shaohua and Lai Mingzhu's Chinese translations (hereinafter referred to as Lin's translation and Lai's translation) as the research objects.

IV. CHINESIZATION DIFFERENCES OF THE TWO TRANSLATIONS AT GRAMMATICAL LEVEL

A. Difference in Word Order

Chinese is isolating language, while Japanese is agglutinative language. They are completely different language families. It won't work if the word order is not changed. Japanese adopts relatively free way of language expression. For instance, in Example 1, if "〜と僕は思った" is replaced with "僕は〜と思った", the meaning will not be changed at all and looks natural. But if the "subject, predicate and object" order in Chinese is changed, the expression will become unnatural. In Example 2, Lai's translation places the "いない(no, not here)" in later position as per the word order in Japanese; although the meaning can be understood, but Lin's translation putting it in the former position as per the word order in Chinese complies with the language expression custom of Chinese people.

- Example 1:

Original text: この連中の真の敵は国家権利ではなく、想像力の欠如だろうと僕は思った。

Lin's translation: 我暗自思忖: 这伙小子的真正敌手恐怕不是国家权力, 而是想象力的枯竭。(meaning: I think to myself that the true enemy of this group of boys is not the state power, but the exhaustion of imagination.)

Lai's translation: 这些家伙真正的敌人不是国家权力, 而是缺乏想象力, 我想。(meaning: the true enemy of those guys is not the state power, but the exhaustion of imagination, I think.)

- Example 2:

Original text: しかしその風景の中には人の姿は見えない。誰もいない、直子もいないし、僕もいない。

Lin's translation: 但那风景中却空无人影。谁都没有。没有直子, 也没有我。(meaning: but there is nobody in the scenery. Nobody. No Zhizi and no me.)

Lai's translation: 然而那风景中却见不到人影。没有任何人在, 直子不在, 我也不在。(meaning: Whereas, nobody can be seen in the scenery. Nobody is here. Zhizi is not here and me neither.)

In word order, Lai's translation fully follows the word order of the original text in Japanese, while Lin's translation follows the word order of Chinese; obviously, Lin's translation is better.

B. Translation of Passive Sentences

Chinese belongs to Sino-Tibetan language family and Japanese belongs to Altaic language family. They are languages of two countries in Asia and have more differences than similarities. For example, both Chinese and Japanese have passive sentences. This is the similarity. But in Chinese, such sentence is collectively called passive sentence, while in Japanese, such sentence is divided into direct passive, indirect passive, aggrieved passive and the like passive sentences. Japanese people like to use passive sentences which are even more common in their literary works. So, in the process of Japanese-Chinese translation, is it suitable to get such passive sentences collectively translated into passive sentences? Obviously this way won't work. In Example 3, if the "失われた時間" is translated into "被失去的时间 (the lost time)" as per passive sentence, it seems strange; in Lin's translation, it is translated in form of active sentence, which makes the translation more natural.

• Example 3:

Original text: 失われた時間、死にあるいは去っていった人々、もう戻ることのない思い。

Lin's translation: 蹉跎の岁月，死去或离去的人们，无可追回的懊悔。(meaning: the wasted time, dead people or leavers becomes irretrievable regret.)

Lai's translation: 被失去的时间，死去或离去的人，已经无法复回的情感。(meaning: the lost time, dead people or leavers have become irretrievable emotions.)

• Example 4:

Original text: これまでにそういわれたことある、他の人から？

Lin's translation: 可曾听人这么说过，从其他人嘴里？(meaning: have you ever heard of this from others?)

Lai's translation: 以前没有被人这样说过，被别的人？(meaning: you haven't been said like this by others before, have you?)

• Example 5:

Original text: 直子の肉体はいくつかの変遷を経た末に、こうして今完全な肉体となって月の光の中に生まれ落ちたのだ、と僕は思った。

Lin's translation: 我想，那肉体已变迁，如今已变得无比完美而降生在月华之中。(meaning: I think, the body has already changed, and now become perfect and born in the moonlight.)

Lai's translation: 直子的身体经过若干转变后，现在已经变成如此完全的肉体，在月光中被生了下来，我想。(meaning: Over several returns, Zhizi's body now has become so complete human body and born in the moonlight, I think.)

From the different translations in Examples 4 and 5, it can be seen that Lin's translation may get some passive sentences in Japanese translated into active sentences as per the language expression custom of Chinese, while Lai's translation get some passive sentences in Japanese translated into passive sentences in strict accordance with the sentence structure in Japanese. Lin's translation is not restricted to the structure in appearance; compared with the form, his translation pays more attention to the expression of the meaning and atmosphere, represents the original work and thus is more acceptable by readers. In contrast, Lai's translation translates word by word, pays attention to the correspondence in forms; it is of mechanical style; sometimes it is confusing, not that smooth and cannot have readers better understand the original author's intention.

V. CHINESIZATION DIFFERENCES OF THE TWO TRANSLATIONS IN TERMS OF CULTURAL WORDS

Precautions in terms of grammar are relatively easy to be mastered; in contrast, Chinesization in culture is relatively difficult. In Chinese, there is no definition on cultural words, and the vocabularies relevant to culture are called "文俗负载词 (cultural custom loaded words)", "文化负载词 (culture-loaded words)", "文化特有词 (culture-specific words)", "国情词 (national conditions based words)", and etc. In English, they are called "culturally conditioned words", "culture-specific terms", "culture-bound terms", "culturally loaded terms",

"national words", "culture-loaded words", "cultural vocabulary", and etc. Cultural words can be divided into culture-specific words and benchmark phrases.

A. Translation of Culture-specific Words

Culture-specific words are vocabularies representing the unique articles in national culture, for example, "袴", "天ぶら", "玄関", "八百屋", "鳥居", "雨戸", "畳" and the like vocabularies relevant to basic necessities of life. Such culture-specific words often appear in literary works. It is ideal if such vocabularies relevant to cultural elements can be translated as per the meaning of the original text; but due to cultural difference, such translation is very difficult for translators to realize and is easy to produce translation error.

• Example 6:

Original text: 僕としてはできることならアパートを借りて一人で気楽に暮らしたかったのだが、私立大学の入学金や授業料や月々の生活費のことを考えるとわがままは言えなかった。

Lin's translation: 就我本人来说，本打算租间公寓，一个人落得逍遥自在，但想到私立大学的入学费和学费以及每月的生活费，也不好意思开口了。(meaning: for myself, i originally intend to rent an apartment for the sake of freedom; but when thinking about the entrance fee and tuition of private university and the monthly living expenses, I'm too shy to ask for it.)

Lai's translation: 以我来说如果可能的话，当然想租一间公寓一个人轻松自在地过，但是一想到私立大学的注册费、学费和每个月的生活费，就不能任性开口了。(meaning: to me, if possible, I surely want to rent an apartment to live a free and comfortable life; but considering the registration fee, tuition and monthly living expenses in private university, it can't ask for it egoistically.)

In Example 6, "入学金 (entrance fee)" is the special culture of universities in Japan and can be called a culture-specific word. However, in universities in China, it is not needed to pay entrance fee, so there is no corresponding Chinese expression. Someone translated it into "注册费 (registration fee)"; but in Chinese, registration fee refers to the fee to be charged upon registration which is required to be made to an agency recognized by the society and government for acquiring certain qualifications in order to carry out specific activities in the society; obviously, this translation is wrong. In contrast, Lin's translation "入学金 (entrance fee)" is relatively suitable.

B. Translation of Benchmark Phrases

Benchmark phrases are also not specially defined; according to the 九鬼周造 "いき" の構造, many words have significant characteristics of the nation and are closely related to the consciousness and act of Japanese people, for example, "勿体ない、なつかしい、やるせない、仕方ない、義理、恥、世間体、貸し借り、先輩、後輩、さわやか、肌合い、湯上り、頑張る、ほのめかす" 「その民族の常用語、頻用語、愛用語など」 「何分ともよろしく、その節はどうも、すみません、言わず語らず、目は口ほどに、角が立つ、しこりが残る、円くおさまる、どこへともなく、いつとはなしに、水に流す」.

• Example 7:

Original text: "俺にはもったいない女だよ"と永沢さんは言った。 そのとおりだと僕も思った。

Lin's translation: "配我太可惜了!"永泽说。我也有同感。(meaning: "I don't deserve her love", Yongze said. I feel the same.)

Lai's translation: "跟我在一起委屈她了。"永泽兄说。我也这样觉得。(meaning: "It's a pity for her to be with me", Yongze said. I think so.)

"もったいない" is often used in Japanese and has the national character of Japan. In Chinese, this word is often translated into "可惜 (pity, not deserve)", just as Lai's translation "配我太可惜了! (I don't deserve her love!)". It is not appropriate to say that this translation is wrong, but it cannot make readers well understand the meaning expressed by the original text and readers can hardly understand what is the pity. Whereas, Lin's translation "跟我在一起委屈她了。(It's a pity for her to be with me)" can make readers feel that "she is so gentle and virtuous, while Yongze is not so good and doesn't deserve her love and she ought to date with a better man"; it is believed that Lin's translation can better Chineseize the original text.

VI. CONCLUSION

Although China and Japan are both in Asia, due to the difference in culture of the two countries, there are still many matters to be noticed in the translation between the two languages. In terms of grammar, it is needed to pay attention to the word order. It is also necessary to know that Japanese people prefer to use passive sentences. In Japanese-Chinese translation, most of such sentences should be translated into active sentences. In cultural aspect, it is necessary to pay attention to the translation of culture-specific words and benchmark phrases; only after the cultural difference between the two countries is mastered can the translation realize "Chineseization" in true sense. Through the comparison of the two translations, it is concluded that in aspect of grammatical standards, Lin's translation basically conforms to the Chinese word order, while most of Lai's translations do not. In Lin's translation, passive sentence in Japanese is translated into the corresponding active sentence in Chinese, which conforms to the expression custom of Chinese, while, in most of Lai's translations, passive sentence in Japanese is translated into the corresponding passive sentence in Chinese as per the original sentence pattern. In terms of cultural standards, their translations both made efforts to "Chineseize" the original text, but there are still situations that readers cannot understand the meaning. In general, Lin translation is more in line with the expression custom of Chinese and is more popular in readers. This study only used the two translation versions for the comparison. The items examined were only limited to the use of words. There are still many areas not sufficiently considered. It is planned to make further study on the sentence and artistic styles on the basis of more translation versions.

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