

On the Translation of *The Dumb Waiter* from A Perspective of Cross-culture Communication

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ABSTRACT

Since translation is a process of being cross-culture communication, it will be a problem to evaluate whether a translation achieves the purpose of cross-culture communication. Therefore, to answer the question clearly and concretely above, this article will study the translation of *The Dumb Waiter* (Harold Pinter, 1957), which was translated by Hua Ming (2010), from a perspective of cross-culture communication. Moreover, it also analyzes whether the translation has achieved the purpose of cross-culture communication from three dimensions: cross-language communication, cross-material communication, and cross-social communication reflected in the translation.

Keywords: *Cross-culture; Translation; Drama; The Dumb Waiter; Harlod Pinter;*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Cross-culture communication refers to communications between people whose cultural cognitive and systems are distinct. Moreover, language is the carrier of each culture, conveying and showing specific cultural meanings or characteristics belonging to its culture. Although cultures differ, translation helps people understand the other culture, even to communicate with the people living in different cultures by transiting different languages. In other words, translation is a process of being cross-culture communication.

1.2 Research Objectives

Drama is essential in western culture since its short, powerful language shows the complete characteristics of the culture. Thus, we must learn western works of drama to be good cross-culture learners in learning western culture. First of all, the translation of drama is precisely such a tool to help understand and read western culture, and also help to equip the competence of being cross-culture communication with people when learning western drama. However, since translation is a process of being cross-culture communication, it will be a problem to evaluate whether a translation achieves Does the translation achieve the purpose of cross-culture communication.

Therefore, this article will study the translation of *The Dumb Waiter* (Harold Pinter, 1957), which was translated by Hua Ming (2010) [1], from a perspective of cross-culture communication. Moreover, it also analyzes whether the translation has achieved the purpose of cross-culture communication from three dimensions: cross-language communication, cross-material communication, and cross-social communication reflected in the translation.

2. Research on the Translation of *The Dumb Waiter*

2.1 Research Analysis

In order to explore the above research questions: the translation of the sentences in the translation reflects the concept of cross-cultural communication and whether the readers can understand the connotation of cross-cultural communication through reading the translation, in other words, whether the translation achieves the purpose of cross-cultural communication. Therefore, this paper will analyze specific examples in the text to study whether the author embodies the concept of trans-linguistic, trans-material, and trans-social cultural communication in translation, and then analyze whether readers can benefit from it.

2.1.1 The Characteristic of Cross-language Communication

Language is a unique cultural phenomenon evolved from human beings, and different languages imply different cultures. In the translation, the translator can not separate language and culture but combine with a particular cultural background to carry out language translation. Culture and language cannot be separated [2]. Thus, it is essential to keep in touch with the culture, analyze and translate from cross-language communication. In *The Dumb Waiter*, the words and expressions used are evidence of the specifics of English language culture. Thus, the translator must consider the difference between the target language and the source language and make balances while translating.

1) But the lavatory does not flush.

但没有冲水声。

The English language is often expressing things without a personal subject. Therefore, impersonal expression is a typical literary style in English. On the contrary, the Chinese often narrate objective things from the person's subject (Lian Shuneng 2010:104). However, Chinese narration often omits the person's subject or implies it when it can be self-evident (Lian Shuneng 2010:105) [3]. In Chinese language culture, the lavatory is an impersonal subject that usually does not lead an action. So, the translator changes the subject in the translation, implying that flushing is human doing.

2) There was a lot of traffic, see?

可是车来车往，明白吗？

3) We've got to be on tap, though.

可咱们得随时待命。

4) Didn't she spread, eh? She didn't half spread.

她是不是血肉横飞，嗯？她也说不上是血肉横飞。

5) He throws his revolver on the bed and speaks with decision.

他把枪扔到床上，斩钉截铁地说。

6) -You don't want to get slack on your job.

-Who me?

-Slack, mate, slack.

-Who me? Slack?

-你不想吊儿郎当地工作吧。

-谁，我？

-吊儿郎当，伙计，吊儿郎当。

-谁，我？吊儿郎当？

7) Gus stumbles in.

格斯踉跄而入。

“Four-character idioms” as a unique language form of Chinese, consists of four single words that can make a certain sense which obeys the rule of the Chinese language using. Gao Jian(1999) has pointed out the functions of four-character idioms describing characteristics, determining attributes, indicating attitudes, admonishing, portraying images, copying scenes, and so on[4]. Thus, the translator uses a lot of four-character idioms in the translation, which can make Chinese readers be familiar with the description and make the depicts vivid and exciting.

8) You kill me.

你要把我笑死了。

9) -No, I was just wondering.

-Stop wondering. You've got a job to do. Why don't you just do it and shut up?

-That's what I was wondering about.

-不，我只是在琢磨。

-别琢磨啦。你有工作要做。你干吗不好好工作，把嘴闭上？

-我琢磨的就是这个。

10) You'll get a swipe round your earhole if you don't watch your step.

你要是说话不留神，可就要吃耳光了。

11) What's going on here?

这儿在搞什么名堂？

The translator adopts functional equivalence in the translation. Such a translation strategy requires the translator to make semantic choices based on the original meaning. The translation should adhere to the basic principle of “faithfulness to the original text” on this premise to ensure the fluency and fluency of the sentence so that the target language readers read fluently and idiomatic to achieve the purpose of cross-cultural language communication.

12) No, honest, it's enough to make the cat laugh.

不，说实在的，这简直会让猫发笑

13) -Go and light it.

-Light what?

-The kettle.

-You mean the gas.

-Who does?

-You do.

-去点上。

-点什么?

-水壶。

-你是说煤气?

-谁说的?

-你说的。

“Enough to make a cat laugh” actually means that something is highly ridiculous or ironic (The Farlex Idioms and Slang Dictionary, 2017) [5]. Due to the translator’s lack of slang knowledge of The English language, the sentence’s literal meaning is translated into the text, while the implied meaning as English slang is lost. Therefore, it causes barriers to cross-language culture communication because Chinese readers will not understand the meaning of this sentence when reading, resulting in cross-language reading barriers. Furthermore, the translator failed to translate the puns of auxiliary verbs *Do* which hinders the cultivation of Chinese readers’ awareness of cross-culture communication. In English, *Do* is used to avoid the repetition of a verb and to substitute and emphasize the main verb.

Furthermore, in the example, there are two verbs in it. One is *Light*, while another one is *Mean*. It means "Who does" can be analyzed as asking who lights the gas or who says "Light the gas". However, the translator only selects one of the meanings as the translation of *Do*.

2.1.2 The Characteristic of Cross-material Communication

Materials here refer to all things and, in general, to all things that exist objectively. Due to individual differences, people may have different reactions to the same material, thus forming different material cultures [1]. Therefore, in the process of translation, the translator should make the readers understand the culture contained in the translated works, supplement the readers with a specific knowledge of Western culture, show the culture contained in the works reasonably, and grasp the expression of the target language reasonably

14) The gas has gone out.

-Well, what about it?

-There’s a meter.

-I haven’t got any money.

-Nor have I.

煤气没有了

-嗯，怎么回事?

-有一个煤气表。

-我一分钱也没带。

-我也没带。

15) Disclosed is a serving-hatch, a “dumb waiter”.

出现了一个送菜升降机，也就是“哑巴侍者”。

16) Half a pint of milk.

半品脱牛奶。

17) One Eccles cake

一块葡萄干馅饼

Due to the differences between Chinese and Western material cultures, in this perspective, the names, functions, and essence of materials produced by different societies are different. In other words, the material reflects the uniqueness of its culture. Therefore, to make Chinese readers better understand the meaning of the original text, translators can combine literal translation with annotations below to make up for the differences between Chinese and Western material cultures. For example, when the gas cannot be appropriately restarted, westerners tend to use the metal nature of coins to restart the gas, while Chinese people do not have this habit. Therefore, if there is no annotation on the role of coins in translation, it will cause obstacles in cross-cultural communication, and readers will have dyslexia. In addition, as a unique western unit of measurement, the pint is very different from the traditional Chinese unit of measurement, and it is helpful to adopt an annotation. What is more, it is a mistake that translates the Eccles cake directly into 葡萄干馅饼, which means “raisin pie” in Chinese because the Eccles cake is a traditional unique British dish, so it is different from the raisin pie in nature.

2.1.3 The Characteristic of Cross-social Culture Communication

Social culture comes from the creation of the people. It has particular group, national and regional characteristics and is closely related to the daily life of ordinary people. People’s life forms are also almost in different historical periods. Therefore, the composition of social culture will be different [1]. When translating, we must pay attention to the social and cultural differences between different cultures.

18) “The first eleven.” You seen this, Ben?

“第一支十一人队”。板球队员。你看过没有，班?

19) We could go and watch the Villa.

我们可以去看维拉队比赛。

20) Put on the bloody kettle, for Christ’s sake.

把该死的水壶坐上，看在上帝的份上。

Sports such as cricket and football are an integral part of western social culture, especially in Britain. Therefore, due to the development of history and social development, English-speaking countries have formed their own social culture of football or cricket—the names of the teams prove it. Therefore, if the translator does not annotate based on literal translation, it will cause obstacles to Chinese readers' reading and understanding. However, religious culture is also an essential cultural result of the long-term development of western society. The translator translated "Christ" as God, which conforms to Western society and culture's development, makes Chinese readers realize the social and cultural differences between China and western countries, and promotes Chinese readers' cross-culture communication skills.

3. DISCUSSION

3.1 Related Research

The cross-cultural communication of translation has enhanced the mutual understanding and emotional integration between countries, regions, and nations, mutual economic benefit, and cultural exchange. Li Bo (2021) remarked that translation is the way to facilitate cultural differences and integration in cross-cultural communication smoothly [6]. In the process of translation with accurate meaning and clear expression, it is vital to deal with cross-cultural factors in translation to achieve the purpose of cultural exchange between nations and countries or regions. Moreover, Liu Changli (2021) has pointed out that studying the linguistic characteristics and cultural connotations of world-famous literature in cross-cultural communication is a part of cultural communication and the actual content in world literature [1].

3.2 The Importance of the Research

The Dumb Waiter, is widely read in China and serves as a bridge for cultural communication between China and the West. Besides, puns and polysemy are characteristic of Pinter's plays, making it more difficult to translate Chinese from different languages in different cultural contexts [7]. Due to the lack of translation materials, the translation research in Pinter's plays has been limited. Thus, the study and discussion of the translation of *The Dumb Waiter* from the perspective of cross-cultural communication will contribute to the study

of cross-cultural communication between Chinese and Western cultures and the communication and progress of Chinese and Western cultures.

4. CONCLUSION

The perspective of cross-culture communication study of the translation can be expressed by comparing the target language and source language to assess the purpose of cross-cultural communication. Furthermore, the translation of the source language and target language transformation smoothly, the principle of the target language translation conforms to the Chinese narrative habits, and do not lose the cultural characteristics of the source language, eventually making Chinese readers read the article clear, cross-cultural understanding and correct.

Although the translation of the source language and the expression of the target language are not well handled in some intercultural communication levels in the translation of *The Dumb Waiter*, the translation retains the source language features. It increases the characteristics of the target language. Thus, the translation of *The Dumb Waiter* has achieved the purpose of cross-cultural communication.

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