



The Influence of Translation and Enlightenment to Translators from a Historical Perspective

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Abstract. The influences of translation are mainly discussed from the positive roles played by translation activities through the investigation of translation history, including influencing and transforming the target language, shaping political thoughts and ideologies, and influencing the exchange and communication between different cultures. At the same time, translation also has some negative effects, including influences of political and literary works. The translator plays an important role in the whole translation process and affects the quality of the translation. This paper mainly introduces the positive effects of translation, the negative effects of translation, and the implications of translation for translators from a historical perspective.

Keywords: Translation · positive effects · negative effects · translators · enlightenment

1 Introduction

Translation is a cross-cultural communication activity, which affects politics, economy, culture and so on. Translation has both positive and negative effects. The translator, as the subject of translation, should master some translation theories and skills, give full play to initiative, strive to maximize the positive role of translation and minimize the negative impact of translation. Language is the foundation of the world. In fact, translation is not thinking from text to text, but thinking about the language itself [1]. From the linguistic point of view, translation is from the text to the text; from a cultural perspective, translation is from the source language to the translator, and then to the targeted language. It is the translator or a group of translators who made efforts in the process of translating the text have made the culture of the “target language” play an important role [2]. Translation, whether as a cultural phenomenon, an ideological movement, or as a profession and a kind of knowledge and skills, is always related to the background of the times. Translation will also be restricted by various factors in a certain era. The concepts, methods, styles, standards and styles of translation all keep pace with the times. After observing translation practice and theoretical research in the world and in China, we have no difficulty concluding that translation is definitely one of the most dynamic and sensitive aspect of human spiritual civilization.

2 Positive Effects of Translation

2.1 Influence and Transformation for the Target Language

In the previous studies, people seldom thought about and discussed the historical roles of translation. Liang Qichao is one of the scholars who deeply thought about translation issues [3]. For example, Liang Qichao's thought of "making a powerful country through translation" is that "translating books is the first essence of making a powerful country". In *Translated Literature and Buddhist Scriptures*, he discussed the influences of Buddhist scriptures translation on Chinese from the aspects of words' absorption and creation, grammar, cultural changes and so on, and put forward a very important point related to language conversion: if there are no corresponding words in the target language, the translator may adopt two methods: one is to follow the old name, and the other is to create a new language [4]. However, the use of old names may be general and distorted, and the old words do not coincide with the new meaning, which can not play the role of translation. Therefore, the creation of new words has become the direction of translators' efforts. If we want to examine the relationship between the May 4th New Culture Movement, it is not difficult to find the importance of the Vernacular Movement to the New Culture Movement, and translation has greatly enhanced and promoted the Vernacular Movement, it is not difficult to find out why Lu Xun, Liu Bannong, Shen Yanbing (also named as Mao Dun), Qu Qiubai, who are writers keening on translation, and others devoted themselves to translation when almost all progressive newspapers and periodicals published translation works before and after the May 4th Movement [5]. In terms of the selection criteria of translated works, Lu Xun believes that the translated foreign literary works need to be beneficial to the society and the readers in China, so as to show the value of the translated works. To translate a foreign language into Chinese, we should not only introduce foreigners' feelings and thoughts to the Chinese people, but also introduce foreigners' language styles, that is, the ways in which such feelings and thoughts are generated, to China. Liu Bannong was a famous literary translator during the May 4th Movement. He advocated to promote the development of Chinese new literature by translating western literature. The poems translated by Liu Bannong, such as the *Qualification of Works*, the *Seashore* and *Sympathy*, are called the earliest prose poems in the history of Chinese translation, which has had a far-reaching impact on the Chinese translation and literary circles. Mao Dun's readiness and high expectations are specific to the proofreading of the translation. Since then, China has opened the prelude to the grand foreign literature translation (and other academic masterpieces) projects, which is a new and wonderful chapter of contemporary literature. Driven by his translation motivation, Qu Qiubai took his translation work seriously and had a high sense of responsibility. All the translated works were carefully studied and he thoroughly understood the original text and then he started to translate. The translated works would be carefully proofread and repeatedly revised to conform to the original meaning [6]. Objectively speaking, translation played an important vanguard role in the May 4th literary revolution, such as opposing classical Chinese, advocating vernacular and establishing new poetry. It is through translation that Chinese has been developed in constant innovation [7].

2.2 The Shaping of Political Thought and Ideologies

The special relationship between translation and politics is a major feature of the development of translation. If we examine the whole translation history from a political perspective, many translation phenomena can be more reasonably explained. At the same time, due to the initial political purpose and value orientation, the role of translation activities is more or less filled with political elements. For example, the translation of Buddhist scriptures in China has achieved brilliant results and accumulated rich translation experience. However, the translation of Buddhist scriptures in all dynasties was inseparable from the support of the feudal dynasties at that time. The rulers of all dynasties, especially in the Tang Dynasty, the emperor encouraged the spread of Buddhism, developed the economy through temple, and vigorously advocated the translation of Buddhist scriptures [8]. At the same time, it also serves its rule that the emperor uses Buddhist thoughts to rule the people and control their thoughts. It is obvious that the translation of Buddhist scriptures had a profound impact on the thoughts of the people of the feudal dynasty, and the ultimate goal was to consolidate the rule of the emperor. The goal of Buddhist scripture translation in the process of translation is reflected in the practice of translation [9].

Ideology influences translation the orientation and translation choices, and translation activities also have certain counter-influences to ideology itself. As some scholars have pointed out, literary translation has changed the ideology of translators and the whole society to some extent. Take Yang Zilin and Bao Tianxiao for example, their translation of half of the Biography of Jia Yin has had a wide social impact. Lin Shu translated the whole level, but he was strongly criticized dramatically. Because the heroine Jia Yin described in the second half of the novel was pregnant and gave birth to an illegitimate child, which was contrary to the traditional Chinese ritual [10]. However, with the passage of time and more and more people translating literature works, these ideas have gradually been accepted by the Chinese people. The shaping of political thoughts and ideologies by translation does not take place overnight or in a short time. It always goes through a process of gradual penetration and deepening, and is manifested in the development of one generation, or even several generations. Since translation plays a far-reaching historical role, translation activities can always be active in social, political, cultural and other fields.

2.3 Influence of the Exchange and Communication Between Different Cultures

People need to communicate with each other in the course of development, so translation came into being. Ji Xianlin pointed out in his preface to the Chinese Translation Dictionary that as long as there are differences between languages and characters, translation is necessary not only within a country or a nation, but also among many countries or nations [11]. The difference between language and culture is the motive force for the growing of translation. In this sense, the purpose and task of translation is to seek ideological communication and promote cultural exchange. Translation plays an important role in the cultural exchanges among different ethnic groups. When we examine translation in the context of human cultural exchange, we can clearly find that translation is not only a simple transformation of text symbols, but also involves all aspects of cultural

exchange, such as the cultural value accumulated by the text, the cultural soil in which the text is placed, and the relationship between the source language culture and the target language culture involved in text transformation [12]. Mutual understanding, mutual respect and mutual supplement between different cultures to achieve the communication of human mind is an ideal pursuit under the multicultural context. Undoubtedly, translation plays a very important role in it. When talking about the relationship between cultural “globalization” and translation in his book “Universality and Difference: Translation Studies from the Perspective of Postcolonial Criticism”, Sun Huijun believes that diverse cultures are important resources for building universal cultures [13]. The only way to transform multicultural resources into global cultures of universal significance is through dialogue between heterogeneous cultures. Translation is the most important medium for communication and dialogue between heterogeneous cultures.

3 Negative Effects of Translation

Due to the improper choices of translation strategies and improper translation of translators, a large number of unqualified translations have been produced, resulting in some negative effects.

3.1 It Has Some Negative Influence of Translation on Politics

The communications and exchanges between countries are carried out through translation. The translation errors in international diplomacy, if any, will make jokes in a small way and affect the relations between the two countries in a big way. And even history will take a major turn. Correct translation is conducive to enhancing China’s international image, international discourse power and China’s international status.

3.2 It Has Some Negative Effects of Translation on Literary Works

More and more attention has been paid to cultural diversities, translation has become more and more popular, and many classical works have been retranslated [14]. However, due to the lack of certain theory and experience, the translated versions completely obliterates the beauty of the original text. For example, from 1830 to 1892, *A Dream of Red Mansions* were produced four English versions [15]. These translation versions were not only inaccurate, but also absurd. They satisfied the readers’ curiosity seeking psychology, but completely lost the beauty of the original, failed to convey the essence of Chinese culture, and were not conducive to the spreading of the Chinese culture.

4 The Influence of Translation and Its Enlightenment to Translators

4.1 Translators Should Have a Solid Bilingual Language Foundation

Translation is closely related to language learning. The process of translation practice can be said to be the process of deeply analyzing the source language, getting its meaning, understanding its spirit, and then expressing it with fluent target language. Without good knowledge of the source language and the target language, it is impossible to thoroughly understand the original text and complete a high-quality translation based on it [16]. Therefore, the translator should have a solid foundation of bilingual language.

4.2 Translators Should Broaden Their Horizon and Learn New Knowledge Constantly

Translation is the medium of spreading cultural knowledge, so the translator should have extensive cultural knowledge. In a broad sense, cultural knowledge mainly includes two aspects: first, it refers to cultural background knowledge, involving politics, economy, geography and so on; second, it means professional knowledge in relevant fields involved in translation work [17]. For example, to translate scientific and technological works, you must master relevant scientific and technological knowledge. To translate articles on humanities and social sciences, you must understand relevant humanities and social sciences knowledge. In view of the fact that all kinds of knowledge intersect with each other and learn by analogy, translators also need to master a wide range of relevant knowledge closely related to their own expertise. Therefore, to some extent, the translator should be a miscellaneous artist.

4.3 Translators Should Use Reasonably Translation Strategies Themselves

Translators should have their own translation strategies. The translator's experience, knowledge, personality and aesthetic views will help them form their own translation strategies. For example, when translating from English to Chinese, translators who have a good foundation in English, weak expression in Chinese or have a more restrained personality may like word-to-word literal translation methods; translators who have a good foundation in Chinese and are free in nature may like the free translation method of "a powerful and unconstrained style" [18]. Translators should master the rules, methods and skills of translation through continuous practice.

4.4 Translators Should Has Good Professional Ethics and Style of Study

Translation is a very complicated and careful work, which requires the translators to pay a lot of hard work. Translation is as a bridge between China and foreign countries [19]. So translators should shoulder the historical mission of spreading advanced culture, promoting social progress and the development of world civilization. The translator must have the spirit of being responsible for the society, devote great enthusiasm to the translation work, be prepared for a long time, and develop a meticulous, rigorous and serious style [20].

5 Conclusion

Translation covers a wide range and is closely related to our lives. It is a long-standing practice and plays an important role in the history of human civilization. The translator, as a bridge and link, connects different countries and nations. In the process of translation, translators should give full play to their subjective initiatives, establish a correct view of translation, maximize the positive role of translation with reasonable theories and techniques, and minimize the negative impact of translation. Only in this way can translation promote national development and cultural progress.

In general, the role of translation in the development of culture and ideology will become more and more obvious. Harvard University Professor Huntington stated in the *Clash of Civilizations*, “In the new world situation, the fundamental cause of human conflicts will no longer be mainly ideological factors or economic pride. The dominant factor of human differences and conflicts will be cultural differences” [21]. For this reason, the role of translation in cultural comparison should not be underestimated. As China strides into the 21st century, we should be fully aware of the significance and role of translation [22]. Many new academic ideas and new scientific knowledge are spread and developed in foreign lands through translation. We should let the world know and understand China better through the translation. In the new historical period, Chinese culture should be guided by translation to regain its self-confidence and due status in the world culture. We should let Chinese culture be further developed within the help of translation.

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