



How Yu Kwang-Chung's Concept of Translation Affects His Cross-Cultural Writing

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Abstract. At present, the research on cross-cultural writing mainly focuses on the writing mode of specific writers and quantitative analysis based on theories, lacking the integrated research from an interdisciplinary perspective. This paper takes cross-cultural writing as the research object, analyses the skills and characteristics of Yu Kwang-chung's bilingual writing in different cultural contexts, and provides practical guidance for the popularisation of cross-cultural literary creation. The results show that Yu's cross-cultural writing has made great achievements in the accuracy of characters, the coordination of language, the traceability of ideology and the diversity of cultural backgrounds, which provides profound enlightenment for cross-cultural writers from both internal and external aspects.

Keywords: Yu Kwang-chung · Translation · Cross-Cultural Writing

1 Introduction

Feng first put forward the scientific concept of “English cross-cultural writing”. It refers to the psychological process in which the communicator, as a member of the Chinese cultural norms, writes in English as a second language under the Chinese cultural background in order to convey to the reader the purpose of his writing, that is, communication, the most relevant verbal information adapted to the context [1]. Taking cross-cultural writing as the research object, this study takes Yu's literary works as an example to conduct a comprehensive interdisciplinary analysis, so as to explore the characteristics of his cross-cultural writing in literary creation and provide practical guidance for overall improvement.

This paper is divided into five parts, the structure is as follows. Firstly, the research object and purpose are introduced. Next, a literature review is conducted to explain the research background. Thirdly, it expounds the theoretical basis of Yu Kwang-chung's translation view. Based on his concept, this paper will analyse Yu's bilingual literature works. Finally, it summarises the characteristics of Yu Kwang-chung's cross-cultural writing to reveal the conclusion and significance of this study.

2 Literary Review

The study of cross-cultural writing includes the combination with other disciplines to reflect its interdisciplinary influence and research value. Zhang analysed the relationship between rhetorical style and cultural meaning from the perspective of comparative rhetoric, emphasised the important role of cultural factors in the development of discourse rhetoric model, and thus discussed the rhetorical style and communication effect in bilingual academic writing from a cross-cultural perspective [2]. Bao studied cross-cultural writing from the perspective of communication, creating theoretical and practical implications for communication theory and related linguistic theories [3]. In terms of identity, language and culture, Zhu manifested the intersubjectivity and interculturality of contemporary ethnic minority literature, and summarises the characteristics of its cross cultural writing to help readers better understand [4].

In addition, some studies took the cross-cultural writing of overseas Chinese writers as the research object, and analysed the cultural values embodied in their works from different angles. For example, Chen and Wu analysed the characteristics of the works of the Dutch writer Lin Mei, which is based on the transcendence of 'selfhood' in the cross-cultural context of women's issues and the relationship between Chinese and Western cultures and human destiny [5]. Chang discussed the cross-cultural characteristics of Yan Geling's writing in the context of globalisation, which is achieving the freedom of communication between different cultures, so as to achieve equal coexistence of multiple cultures is her ultimate cultural demand [6]. Wang analysed the writers' reflection and enlightenment on the local culture and nation in North American Chinese literature from the perspective of marginal identity and cultural identity, and summarised the new changes and new grasp of cross-cultural writing in the process of East West cultural integration [7]. Mo has studied Lin Yutang's English novels and concluded that his cross-cultural writing focuses on the grand narrative of the times and the nation based on humanity and fraternity, which is of positive significance to the creation of contemporary overseas Chinese novels [8]. Jiang analysed cross-cultural writing strategies of Zhang Ailing and Lin Yutang, summarised their writing style and characteristics, and investigated the historical conditions and power relations in their literary works in the post-colonial context [9]. In a more comprehensive way, Zhou studied the cross-cultural writing of female writers from mainland China in the past three decades. Without being limited by the space of the research object, it deeply analyses the image, identity, gender and language issues in women's writing, and summarises the interactive impact of multiculturalism on writers [10].

Regarding theoretical research on cross-cultural writing, some scholars have conducted research on the practical guiding function on the basis of existing theories. Guided by Thomas' theories of cross-cultural pragmatic failure, Zhan and Liu analysed the common types and main causes of cross-cultural pragmatic failure with the help of CLEC corpus, and put forward suggestions for Chinese EFL learners [11]. Almuhailib evaluated the teaching methods of cross-cultural writing based on existing contrastive rhetoric approaches, and pointed out its advantages and disadvantages and the direction for improvement [12]. Hamideh and Shirin analysed the English and Persian abstracts of the research articles and found out their different focuses and corresponding models, thus providing teaching inspiration for TEFL, especially writing skills [13]. Tanya

and other scholars revealed the unique methodological and ethical challenges in cross-cultural research, summarised the basic elements that researchers are allowed to solve, and thus verified the usefulness of interdisciplinary principles and practical dialogue [14].

Taken together, the current research mainly focuses on the writing mode of specific writers and the quantitative analysis based on theory. At present, there is a lack of research on the integration of interdisciplinary perspectives in cross-cultural writing. Translation studies and cross-cultural writing are interchangeable in many aspects, and they are widely cross cutting. For example, both of them include linguistic elements, second language acquisition, communicative functions, etc. However, the comparison between the two and the study of the cross-reference point still need to be further discussed, because it may stimulate the inspiration of the corresponding disciplines.

Yu Kwang-chung's concept of translation encompasses many theoretical and practical experiences in many fields, including linguistics, literature and interculturalism. Meanwhile, as a poet, writer and translator, Yu has reached the peak of his Chinese and English proficiency, and has a comprehensive understanding of Eastern and Western cultures in his profound attainments. His discourse reflects the rigour and integrity of scholars and provides a theoretical basis for cross-cultural writing research. Therefore, this paper will take Yu's literary works as an example to conduct a comprehensive interdisciplinary analysis to explore the characteristics and improvement direction of cross-cultural writing in literary creation.

3 Theoretical Basis

Yu Kwang-chung pointed out that positive westernisation can be found in the best translation. Translation is the 'legal import' of westernisation, different from those secret 'illegally westernised' creations, which makes it difficult for readers to prevent. Superior translation usually derives from the translator's proficiency in cutting short and solve the stagnation encountered. In this way, the translator is able to convert accurate and flexible Chinese into obviously different and cross-cultural English. Such translated texts fully adapt to the Eastern and Western cultures, live up to the mission of the Chinese people, and bring back the most authentic English. Although not completely a creation, it is definitely an outstanding westernised work, far better than countless 'westernised but not transformed' creations. According to Yu's translation view, the factors that make Chinese and Western cultures different can be divided into external factors and internal factors. To be specific, external factors refer to character and language, while internal ones include ideology and cultural backgrounds [15].

3.1 Character

Due to the frequent cultural communication in Europe, it is difficult to keep the character of each nation pure. Therefore, the inflection and articulation in English are varied and not well unified. In modern English, monophonic words with strong sound and plain coarse meaning are mostly derived from Old English, while most felicities words with soft pronunciation and elegant meaning come from Latin. In Western literature, the

choice of words can form a sharp contrast with the meaning of the text, and greatly enhance its literary effect [15].

Chinese characters have no separate phonetic components, so the changes in articulation do not affect their inflection. Although Chinese vernacular is highly divergent, it is still a carrier of a living tradition, benefiting from the unity of this character. In English, not only the spelling of dialects is very different, but also their inflection changes with the change of pronunciation. Not only does the spelling of dialect vary considerably, but its inflection develops as the articulation changes. In addition, English nouns have singular and plural forms, verbs have present and past tense, and subjects are written differently depending on pronouns. From the perspective of readers, the subtle changes of these characters may lead to wide differences in understanding and aesthetic concepts. In contrast, Chinese is inflection-free. Chinese single characters can be used as a variety of lexical form, making it easy to create a seamless aesthetic counterpoint that is difficult to achieve in English [15].

In addition restricted by the marking method, abstract nouns in Chinese must be independent and separated from other part of speech, such as adjectives and verbs, to distinguish. Yu believes that the Chinese translation of abstract nouns should have three attributes, namely comprehensibility, conciseness and necessity.

3.2 Language

In terms of sentence structure, crowns, prepositions, pronouns, conjunctions and other elements are indispensable in English grammar, which appears deliberate but cumbersome. Comparatively speaking, Chinese context is highly concentrated. Taking poetry for example, the subject and verb can be omitted without confusing with the original meaning, while in English sentences, each element of the sentence needs to be explained clearly. For figures of speech, due to differences in grammatical systems, the same technique may play different roles in different cultures. For instance, when palindromes are used, Chinese classical poetry is full of flexibility, allowing readers to encode the text from different angles, and providing space for convolitional imagination. Compared with this effect, inversion in English is more about playing with words and lacks the function of highlighting national cultural values [15].

Furthermore, differences in the sequence of expressions may lead to differences in language energy. Chinese characters excel at superimposing imagery to create a unique artistic conception, whereas English words and phrases are less dense, so cultural transmission with the same meaning is required in translation. For example, the syntax of Chinese poetry allows some permutations and combinations, but the restrictions of English grammar cannot be solved by sentence length and rhythm. Therefore, English frequently uses adjectival clauses and introduces pronouns with suffixes to elaborate, whereas the priority function in Chinese cannot be played by one word. As a result, a lengthy sentence needs to be broken down and explained order to be more concise and powerful [15].

English is about cause and effect, subject and object. The logical relationships need to be clearly explained in grammar, whereas Chinese relies much more on the natural order of the context than on literal articulation, so the organisation of sentences and paragraphs appears to be more loose. This can be reflected specifically that in English,

the subject is often a precise noun clause, whereas in Chinese it is a matter of fact. Therefore, in the process of cross-cultural writing, it is necessary to rewrite grammar and unravel logic. In terms of voice, English has a passive voice. However, in essence, such sentences usually only have the receiver, not the giver, and they only present the side of the event cautiously but not explicitly. In Chinese, the concept of passivity is relatively weak, hence the addition of words like 'be' and 'by' after westernisation is redundant and self-defeating [15].

3.3 Ideology

The main components of Western culture include Greek mythology, Christian doctrine, and modern science. Myths in Chinese literature are scattered, without orderly and interrelated myths, so they are more like secular literature than sacred literature. In classical Chinese literature, Confucian has a high status, almost free from the influence of religion, and has no concept of 'original sin'. Chinese love poems usually express the idea that lovers are immortal in today's world and, cease to exist after death, leaving only spiritual thoughts rather than worshipping them as gods. In Western literature, the image of Satan is profound and complicated, and love is regarded as a religious belief that heaven exists and lovers will always meet in a sacred space after death. This attitude tends to be idealistic, deifying the object of love [15].

In addition, the philosophy of the supernatural world is different between China and the West. Chinese literature is more observant and emotive, but not able to expand imagination and ideology. Classical Chinese literature is keen on lyric short poems and essays, while literary criticism is loose and unsystematic on the whole. By comparison, Western literature is filled with great epic poems and narrative poems, so its theme focuses on the conflict between man and God (religious poetry), while Chinese literature prefers the tacit understanding between man and nature (epic poetry) [15].

3.4 Cultural Backgrounds

George Orwell pointed out that a country's language situation reflects and affects its influences the governance of its society and the prosperity of its culture. The authority regime inevitably confused the meaning of language with the facts behind it. He demonstrated that the two common problems in modern English are, respectively, obsolete imagery and unclear expression. For example, the reader is confused in the gobbledygook by convoluted and redundant grammar, vague word selection and unclear meaning [15].

Chinese culture is broad and profound, and has little exotic influence on language and literature. As a consequence, Chinese characters contain few foreign words, which means that the elasticity and durability are rarely damaged, and the readability of the text is not significantly reduced due to the continuous cultural vicissitude. Ancient poetry, prose and drama are still celebrated as read by students up to now without losing charm and meaning. The Latin of the West, however, has become a dead text, which can only be understood by scholars, experts and monks. Even if annotations are added, it can only be read by a few people. Chinese norms include simple wording, grammatical symmetry, syntactic flexibility and intonation resonance. During the New Culture Movement of

the 20th century, the debate, retention and fusion of the Mandarin and the Vernacular reached a climax, and Chinese gradually became integrated into the modern pursuit of 'westernisation'. The simplicity of the Vernacular, the orderliness of English and the naturalness of the colloquial language have all been incorporated into the new order of Chinese, forming a pluralistic and flexible writing style. The perniciousness of cross-cultural writing is reflected in the lack of the ability of some writers to choose and reconstruct texts properly. For example, misuse of pronouns, juxtaposition and opposition, prepositions such as 'about, concerning, with regard to', the creation of composite verbs out of nowhere, and the devaluation of ready-made flexible verbs, which Orwell calls 'verbal false limb', mounted on a sound but destroyed verb [15].

4 Revelation Analysis of Yu Kwang-Chung's Cross-Cultural Writing

Taking Yu Kwang-chung's bilingual poetry as examples, this paper discusses the manifestation of his translation view in cross-cultural writing from both internal and external factors, and conduct a correlation analysis in order to explore the characteristics of his writing, so as to provide practical guidance for Chinese-English cross-cultural writing in a broad sense.

4.1 Character

The first point is related to inflection and articulation.

The unique sounds of Chinese characters are rooted from history and cultural backgrounds, so it is relatively unrealistic to replace or convert them into another language. Therefore, in English, the writer can choose to focus on meaning and complement phonetics by modifying breaks and rhymes on the basis of accurate interpretation of the original meaning, and choosing words whose pronunciation matches the overall emotion. In addition, the aesthetic characteristics of the English alphabet, their horizontal and vertical aesthetics and different lengths can also be reflected in Chinese English cross-cultural writing.

Example 1: <Seven Layers Beneath>

Mute the bugles, mute the neighing horses that shied [16].

'Neighing horses that shied' uses subordinate clauses. From the Chinese perspective, these clauses seem not compact, but according to the Western wording conventions, their wording structure is rigorous and their sense of dynamic has been well preserved. The Chinese phrase sounds extremely imposing, and the pictorial sense of the hieroglyphs is almost leaping off the page.

Example 2: <Gray Pigeons>

An obscure, subdued complaint

Now and then is heard to coo and croon.

On and on through the afternoon

A rosary's told and told and told,
The secret of beads still unknown [16].

Chinese reduplicative 'han han hu hu' (vaguely) is transferred as multiple adjectives 'obscure, subdued' in English context, which directly conveys the connotation Yu wants to express. English is rich in verbs, and subtle differences can lead to different usages of the same word and choices of vocabulary. The choice of words and even new and vivid words can meet the needs of the writer through combination. In this poem, onomatopoeia 'di gu di gu' turns into verbs 'coo and croon'. From 'bing bing' (icy) to 'more to chill than cheer', Yu uses rhyming and comparison to narrate the poet's solitude and depression. 'Told and told and told' explains the first two 'count' words, which, as verbs, have the same meaning as count, reflecting the interpretation and expression of emotions in different cultures. However, the third 'count' in the original text must be split into the next line to become 'still unknown'. In this case, the lexical functions of repetition, coherence and boredom can be fully inherited.

Second, the use of abstract nouns and singular and plural forms are subject to the rules of each language system.

Example 3: <Seven Layers Beneath>

Till trod and broken lie all the heart-shaped designs,
All the insistence and futilities.

<Smoke Hole Cavern>

In vain tries to push aside
The impenetrability of it all

<Gray Pigeons>

I have a hunch across the sea [16].

'Insistence and futilities' are written as plural nouns while in Chinese context they are originally abstract nouns. Likewise, 'impenetrability' is used to convey the feeling of deep, endless and confused, transforming imagination into reality; 'there must be' is converted to 'hunch' as a specific object. This transformation shows that, according to different language cultures and decoders, multiple lexical forms can represent complex meanings and have different functions.

Thirdly, when it comes to tense, English proves to be more rigorous literally because it needs supplementary words to clarify time and space. In terms of Chinese, except for subtle word substitution, no additional words are needed to create the thematic atmosphere. For example, cold fog 'will rise' and dews 'will nibble'.

The last point about character is variations and accounts of the subject. While English appears to be clear and straightforward in explaining the subject, Chinese tends to use personification and perspective flexibly, which brings readers complex emotional experience.

Example 4: <Seven Layers Beneath>

After the war the vastness of a battlefield
Is listening to a lone, late crow.

Also falls

The night, slippery down my icy face.
 Your past is west of the sunset, west of it.
 <Gray Pigeons>
 The secret of beads still unknown [16].

For example, 'vastness' replaces 'battlefield' as the theme to make the whole sentence smooth. 'Whose icy face' is written as 'my icy face'; 'past events' - 'your past'. The referred-to-subject 'secret' is not included in the Chinese context, because even if only the predicate verb is left, and the subject and object are omitted, the reader can still understand the meaning of the sentence. English writing, on the other hand, needs to make the central meaning word clear and solid, otherwise it reads not blank-leaving, but invalid.

4.2 Language

With regard to grammar of the two languages, articles, prepositions, pronouns and conjunctions are necessary and cannot be deleted in English. In Chinese, a single word is enough to formulate as a sentence, omit the rest, make full use of the phonetic momentum of Chinese characters, and naturally introduce the following statements. In example five, the function of emphasis is transformed from verb to adverb through inversion.

Example 5: <Seven Layers Beneath>
 Softly I tread. Softly, on seven layers of autumn dead [16].

Secondly, the sequence and energy in language are systematically different due to the cultural background on which it depends. As Yu put it, the order of words in English should not be changed at will, or their grammar may be damaged and their meanings may be misinterpreted.

Example 6: <Smoke Hole Cavern>
 While outside, rise and fall the dynasties.
 Eternity's where they never meet [16].

'Within rise and fall', 'eternity' and 'float in vain' are three parts of the original sentence in the original Chinese text. If we randomly permute them and skillfully add some functional word, then its literary effect will not change, or at least will not change. In English, however, without considering the literary function and reference of the subject, placing nihilism words in the position of the subject at will make people confused when reading, because it may lead to obscurity or incoherence.

Another element of syntax comes down to dealing with images. English excels at using adjectival clauses, introducing pronouns that need to be explained in detail with suffixes, while Chinese prefers superimposition. Examples include: 'song feng'- 'wind ebbs among the pines'; 'luo ri'- 'sun sets'; 'can xue'- 'only snow'; 'tu ke'- 'thin are the bald branches'; 'zhou ma'- 'curse, in dissonant blasphemies', which added explanations to enhance the degree; 'icy' is replaced by 'subterranean, blind, cold' to lay the foundation of coldness.

Example 7: <Seven Layers Beneath>

The wind now ebbs among the pines. The sun sets
 West of the Civil War. Only snow garrisons the frontier.
 Thin are the bald branches, like starved nerves of the ear.
 Begins to curse, in dissonant blasphemies,
 General Sedgwick with the broken sword.
 <Smoke Hole Cavern>
 Where, subterranean, blind, cold,
 Gargles the trickle of a stream [16].

The third element relates to figure of speech. As a rhetorical technique, repetition in Chinese is acceptable both in function and aesthetics. In such occasion, English tends to utilise multiple perspectives and forms of interpretation of a thing or phenomenon, turning the antithesis into abstract conclusion. For instance, in the poem <Gray Pigeons>, ‘han han hu hu’ is written as ‘inarticulate, which seems to stammer and hesitate’; The triple sentence ‘there is a ... (present participle) ...’ is written as ‘there’s someone murmuring my name, Some unseen lips tickling my ear’.

Example 8: <Gray Pigeons>

A complaint most inarticulate,
 Which seems to stammer and hesitate
 There’s someone murmuring my name,
 Some unseen lips tickling my ear.
 <Seven Layers Beneath>
 Startled and strained are the statued ears [16].

English is adept at constructing artistic conception through rhyme, without deliberately emphasising anthropomorphism. ‘Bai li’ (a hundred miles) is a vast range, the original text intends to underline the far-reaching impact of curse. The English text does not maintain this amazing effect, but uses alliteration to deepen its appeal.

The fourth point turns out to be the logical relationship embodied between lines. In English, it is supposed to be clearly explained, and the literal connections are very strict, whereas in Chinese, the natural connection can be established through context.

Example 9: <Smoke Hole Cavern>

And beats them up and down
 And beats them left and right [16].

A four-character phrase ‘yang zhang ji shi’ (raising a staff and striking the stone) is dramatic enough to let Chinese readers see a dynamic perspective of constant repetition and multi-angle attack, while English needs to repeat it again in poetry to see a more vivid picture.

Last but not least, English frequently uses the passive voice, while Chinese does not. And in English the recipient is often an exact noun clause, whereas in Chinese it is an event. For example, ‘dong li cang jin’-‘here hid their gold’, ‘wei shu qing’-‘still unknown’, ‘su ku’-‘is heard to’.

4.3 Ideology

To begin with, there are great differences between the religious beliefs of China and the West, which leads to their different emphasis and preferences in shaping derivative images. Based on this understanding, the attribution of emotions and whether they have symbolic significance deserve the author's deep consideration.

Example 10: <Seven Layers Beneath>
WISDOM SURVIVES PASSION. Ah, exile roaming the battlefield,
There is no past for you, no, not a bit [16].

'Tai Shang' was the ancient Chinese pronoun for the emperor who is in the highest position in ancient China. In literary writing, Chinese people would attribute the unexplained predestined experiences to faith, i.e., the laws of nature. Western writing depends more on the use of abstract nouns to refer to the original meaning, which is clear and represents faith. The translation of typical Chinese imagery into English slang, and the use of capitalisation to suggest readers that there exists deeper meaning behind the sentence, is a cross-cultural manifestation of ideology.

Secondly, Chinese articulately depicts emotion and draw the essence of life from nature, while English uses imagination to tell the relationship between man and God based on systematic and vast myths and legends.

Example 11: <Smoke Hole Cavern>
We grope upstream along the Lethe
To find the mountain's appendix lead
<Seven Layers Beneath>

Soon the cold fog will rise, and under the biotite sky [16].

'The mountain's appendix lead' embodies the use of personification and the integration of emotion into the natural scene. 'Ye kong'-'Biotite sky', the word is chosen to blend into the dark, deep and dimmed atmosphere of the poem, and a specific and unique adjective is chosen to expand imagination and modify a single noun. If we had used a generic word like black, we would have had fewer imagery.

4.4 Cultural Backgrounds

As Yu said, Chinese characters are minimally influenced by foreign languages, so they have a high degree of flexibility and durability, showing the characteristics of not changing with cultural development. English, on the other hand, will undergo significant changes in the shape, pronunciation and usage of the language as civilisations develop, foreign cultures exchange, and social and political upheavals occur. Examples include 'pao'-'guns', 'nan jun'-'confederates', 'hong qiu zhang' - 'Indian chief', which indicate Yu's adaptation to Western understanding of warfare, the differences in the representation of typical objects reflect the migration of Chinese and English history and culture.

Chinese is diverse, well-ordered and flexible, encompassing the simplicity of the Vernacular and the intimacy of the Mandarin. When writing cross-culturally from Chinese to English, it is important not to destroy the objective culture and context of the target language.

Example 12: <Smoke Hole Cavern>
 Reefs of coral under our feet
 And candelabra overhead.
 So slowly grow Creation's beards.
 An inch's fall, an inch's rise [16].

'Qian zhan lin lang', 'Candelabra overhead', 'Pan Gu de bai xu', 'Creation's beards', These transformations use classical imagery, echo the images of ancient Chinese and Western lamps and creators, and eliminate the cultural perception differences caused by time and space. 'An inch's fall, an inch's rise' shifts the focus of readers in the context of Chinese and Western cultures, and achieves better communication results.

5 Conclusion

To sum up, the four parts of correlation analysis on Yu Kwang-chung's literary works collectively interpret the characteristics of his cross-cultural writing, including the accuracy of characters, the coordination of language, the traceability of ideology and the diversity of cultural backgrounds. His wording and phrasing skills, as well as his immersive thinking and application, have provided profound inspiration for cross-cultural writers from both internal and external aspects. Additionally, the formation of a personalised language style is also conducive to a person's bilingual writing.

This paper focuses on the limited range of Yu's works, so the comprehensiveness and thoroughness of his cross-cultural writing may need to be expanded. With the continuous improvement of the study of language system, the integration of translation, culture, language, cognition and other related fields will be gradually explored and realised in order to achieve the perfection of cross-cultural writing.

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