

Application of Foreignization and Domestication in Cuisine Translation in Hong Lou Meng

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Abstract

The dietary names in Hong Lou Meng reflect Chinese culture. The purpose of this paper is to study the translation of cuisine names in the English versions by Yang Xianyi and David Hawkes from perspectives of dietary culture and linguistic forms. The thesis examines two strategies of translation-foreignization and domestication, which have been studied by lots of people at home and abroad. The analysis I have made shows that the choice between foreignization and domestication depends on three aspects-linguistic form, cultural difference and special language structure. Thus, the results of the research may offer some reference to the translation of names.

Keywords

Hong Lou Meng; Cuisine name translation; Foreignization; Domestication.

1. Introduction

This paper discusses the translation of cuisine names in Chinese classic novel Hong Lou Meng through the use of foreignization and domestication based on aspects from the Chinese culture and linguistic forms.

The novel, Hong Lou Meng, is a perpetual book that is regarded as an encyclopedia of Chinese feudal society. According to the data statistics analysis, its one-third contents are related to the Chinese dietary customs. 186 dishes have been mentioned in the novel. This thesis based on the two English versions by Yang Xianyi and David Hawkes makes a further study on the translation of cuisine names by the use of foreignization and domestication.

The Chinese cuisine culture mainly contains four characteristics. They are seriality, sense of hierarchy, territoriality and religiousness. On the more detailed aspect, Chinese people attach great importance to the color, aroma and taste of food. The dish was not only for people to eat but also for appreciation. It was a work of art.

In China, there is an old saying, "Food is the paramount necessity of the people." More and more researchers pay great efforts on the comparison between David Hawkes' version and Yang's version in Hong Lou Meng. Previous studies have used different criteria to evaluate the two versions including the function-based approach, the form-based approach and a combined approach of function and form. Although each method of studies has its emphasis on the version of Hong Lou Meng, it is too one-sided. We could not make such quick analysis just through one aspect. Hong Lou Meng is not only a masterpiece in the history of Chinese literature, but also a epitome of the whole dynasty. The study of the dynasty means making efforts in every field as much as possible. It is inappropriate to evaluate it just from the single aspect. Therefore, this study intends to fill the gap by comparing Hawkes' version with Yang's version three aspects. Based on the culture, I will further focus on the choice of the word under two strategies foreignization and domestication.

2. Foreignization and Domestication Strategy in Translation

Domestication and foreignization are two common used strategies of the translation. Meanwhile, there are lots of debates over them. Many researchers have done research on this field. In this part, the thesis mainly focuses on the comparison between them.

2.1. Definitions of Foreignization and Domestication

Translation is not only a transformation of language, but also the transplant and spread of the culture. In 1813, the German Philosophy Seleiermacher has explained the translation incisively in his book. "There are only two. Either the translator leaves the author in peace, as much as possible and moves the reader towards him; or he leaves the reader in peace, as much as possible and moves the author towards him." [1] Seleiermacher holds that "it is the translator's duty to show the cultural differences and linguistic differences in translation." [2]

Domestication puts much attention to the target language to reduce the pressure on readers due to the culture differences. Eugene A Nida is the firm supporter of domestication. He believes that "Translation consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style." [1]. This famous idea is called "dynamic equivalence". Translators should do their best to find natural "equivalence" in the target language instead of creating new language to translate it. "This requires that the language in version should be idiomatic, natural and easy to be accepted by the target language readers." [3] It is impossible that cultural system of the source language could be totally added to the target language: Translation is not only a work of solving language obstacles but also culture conflicts. In addition, Nida thinks that the goal of translation is the communication and the reader is the best standard of measuring of translation. Different countries have different cultures. The core work of translator is to build a bridge to make both sides to communicate in a harmonious way without cultural conflicts.

Foreignization adopts the expression of the source language. Venuti believes that "fluency translation strategy will cover cultural differences which, in fact, are a practice of cultural imperialism." [4] Therefore, "translation should adopt 'resistant strategies' to reflect the language cultural differences coded in the source and target text and to resist imperialistic domestication." [3] Foreignization respects the source language which admits the cultural differences. Translators who support foreignization believe that readers have their own intelligence and enough imagination to understand source language countries' culture. It is also a way of transplanting source language expressions to the enriching target language.

2.2. Comparison Between Foreignization and Domestication

Foreignization and domestication have obvious differences. Firstly, they follow different principles of translation. Foreignization fully respects the values of the source language; however, domestication stresses that target language should control the whole process of translation. Secondly, they have different emphasis. Foreignization focuses on the linguistic form of source language but domestication concentrates on the mode of aesthetic reading for target language readers. Thirdly, they are two opposite ideologies. Foreignization expresses an attitude of autonomy. It remains the exotic atmosphere and pursues the cultural diversity. Translators encourage readers to dig the potential values of the source language. They think it is right and proper to help foreigners to understand the culture. It is the true way of spreading the culture. Domestication takes the particular traits and habits of the target language into consideration. Translators think it's a proper way to help readers understand the version easily and reduce the pressure of reading. In conclusion, foreignization fully maintains the foreign cultural expression which enriches the expression in the target language. But, it may bewilder target language readers in understanding the original meaning of the writers. Domestication can transmit Chinese traditional culture much more correctly, which is conducive to help target

language readers understand the writers' connotative meaning, thus avoiding misunderstanding due to linguistic obstacles and cultural conflicts.

3. Application of Domestication in Hong Lou Meng

There are many examples related to the strategy of domestication. This section mainly focuses on the cuisine translation in the novel from three perspectives including free translation, substitution and amplification. The analysis would also take culture and history into consideration.

3.1. Free Translation

The free translation is the common method to translate various literary works. Many researchers prefer to adopt such a method to translate Chinese traditional cultural words. In this part, I mainly focus on the translation of cultural-loaded words.

Example: 刘姥姥道：“我知道什么名儿？样样都是好的。”贾母笑道：“把茄鲞夹些。”

Version A: “I don't know the names of any of these dishes,” said Grannie Liu. “Anything you like. They all taste good to me. Give her some of the dried aubergine,” said Grandmother Jia.

Version B: “How can I tell what these dishes are?” said Granny Liu. “They all look good to me. Give her some fried egg-plant.” proposed the lady Dowager with a smile.

“茄鲞” is one of the most popular dishes in Hong Lou Meng. According to the original cooking methods, ‘鲞’ refers to the pickled food. ‘茄鲞’ is a kind of dried eggplant pickled by soup-stock. The eggplant which is known as aubergine in Britain is the main ingredient. Basically, people firstly peel and dice it and then fry it with the oil. Secondly, the diced eggplants will be simmered with chicken, mushroom, tofu and bamboo shoot in the chicken soup. When the soup becomes dry, the food will be mixed with sesame oil and preserved in a porcelain jar. Both two English versions adopt free translation; however, version A is much better than version B in the aspect of decoding the core secret cooking methods. Version B ignores the most important step of making such a dish which needs simmering in the soup until it is dry. The use of “fry” is too simple and ill-considered to describe the whole cooking process. Although it is difficult for us to find an equivalence to “茄鲞”, version A with dried aubergine not only contains the completed cooking methods of it to uncover the complicated process of the Chinese dietary culture, but it also provides a familiar sense for English people with the use of “aubergine” rather than “eggplant”. In addition, I want to mention that both two versions ignore one thing—medicinal value. The taste of food is just the basic need; furthermore, people have a great thirst on the healthy and the medicinal value of the food. Nowadays, it is a crucial problem for cook to cultivate the new menu in which to a large extent food could remain original nutrients. Peng Aimin writes in his book “Eggplant is a food with promoting circulation and removing stasis and improving stomachache's circulation of blood.” The eggplant contains great benefits to the people's health. For the Jia family, people are not purely in pursuit of quantity but the quality of the food. Two versions don't mention the medicinal function. On one aspect, it makes foreigners ignore the richness and honor of the Jia family, on the other side; it is easy for foreign readers to regard the dish as a simple dish thus discounting the culture transmission.

3.2. Substitution

For the translation of literary works, the translator always makes the effort to find equivalent words to translate the source language. On one point, it could help the readers to be familiar with the cultural-loaded words quickly and on the other point, it helps translators to translate such words easily.

Example: 王夫人又问：“吃了什么没有？”袭人道：“老太太给的一碗汤，喝了两口，只嚷干渴，要吃酸梅汤。”

Version A: "Has he had anything to eat yet?" said Lady Wang. "He had a few sips of some soup Her Old Ladyship sent, "said Aroma, "but that's all he would take. He kept complaining that he felt dry. He wanted me to give him plum bitters to drink."

Version B: "Did he eat anything?" "Only two mouthfuls of the soup the lad lady sent. He complained he was parched and asked for some sour plum juice."

"酸梅汤" is a traditional Chinese beverage which is usually cooked by dark plum and rock candy with medicinal herbs as hawthorn and liquor ice. "People usually drink it in summer which can clear heat and promote the production of the body fluid to quench thirst." [3]It doesn't contain alcohol; However, Hawkes translates it into "plum bitter". "It is a bitter liquid state from a mixture of plant products and used to taste to alcoholic a drink which is used to sober up." [6]This version may distort Chinese dietician customs. Yang's version with sour plum juice is more appropriate. Juice means the liquid that comes from fruits and vegetables. The juice is equivalent to "汤". It is easy for readers to understand the function of this beverage.

3.3. Amplification

The method of amplification is usually used in the translation of words which contain great historical cultural meaning. In Hong Lou Meng, many cultural-loaded words contain in-depth meanings. This part mainly talks about how to use this approach to translate the connotation of such words.

Example : 屠苏酒

Version A: New-Year wine

Version B: herb-flavored New Year's Eve wine

On the New Year's Eve, Chinese people always stay with families and hold a banquet. People enjoy drinking and eating. Wine is an essential part of the party. "屠苏酒" is a kind of wine which is made from herb. "According to historical record, this wine was invented by Hua Tuo with several herbs, and spread by Sun Simiao." [3]This wine can also get rid of certain diseases. Version A just focuses on the New Year. On one side, "屠苏" is a total unfamiliar thing for foreign people even modern Chinese people. It is necessary to add some explanations to the translation; on the other side, "屠苏酒" is not only a simple wine to celebrate the reunion, but also it has great herbal value for the health. Pharmaceutical value of diet runs through the whole history of Chinese cultural dietary custom. Version B is more precise to translate it into "herb-flavored New Year's Eve wine." Although the pre-modifier is a bit long, this translation allows foreigners to know components of this special wine accurately and raise concerns on Chinese culture.

4. Application of Foreignization in Hong Lou Meng

Many researchers have also made great deal work of analysis of foreignization. This section pays much effort on the specific examples of cuisine translation. The specific examples would be analyzed from two aspects of transliteration and literal translation.

4.1. Transliteration

The method of transliteration may be the easiest approach in the translation work. In the novel, based on the great history and abundant culture, transliteration is not an easy way to translate such words. A lot of issues need to be considered, including geography, accents, etc.

Example : 只见妙玉亲自捧了一个海棠花式雕漆填金云龙限寿的小茶盘，里面放一个成窑五彩小盖钟，捧与贾母。贾母道：“我不吃六安茶。”

Version A: When she arrived back presently with the tray. It was a little clique-loved lacquer tea-tray decorated with a gold-in filled engraving of a cloud dragon coiled round the character for "longevity". On it stood a little covered teacup of Cheng Hua enameled porcelain. Holding

the tray out respectfully in both her hands, she offered the cup to Grandmother Jia. "I don't drink Lu-an tea," said Grandmother Jia.

Version B: He saw Miaoyu bring out in her own hands a carved lacquer tea-tray in the shape of crab-apple blossom, inlaid with a golden design of the "cloud dragon offering longevity." On this was a covered gilded polychrome bowl made in the Cheng Hua period, which she offered to the Lady Dowager, "I don't drink Liuan tea," said the old lady.

Tea plays an important role in the history of Chinese dietary culture. There are so many kinds of tea. According to Redology statistics, "tea" is mentioned in Hong Lou Meng for 459 times and there are 262 kinds of descriptions of "tea" in different chapters." [5] The version A "Lu-an-tea" and version B "Liu-an-tea", the different pronunciation needs to trace back to history. Historically, "六" was a place which meant high land and belonged to the decedents of Gao Tao. It had the same pronunciation with Lu. "六安茶" is a kind of tea produced in "Liuan", An hui province. The local people here nowadays still call it "Lu an". According to concepts raised by Venuti, "transliteration can help to keep the local color." [4] Hawkes takes local custom into consideration. He translates "六安茶" into "Lu-an tea" based on the Chinese history. It is more accurate with the original pronunciation. But it may puzzle the foreign people who start to learn Chinese. If the version was added annotations, the whole translation would be more perfect. Yang Xianyi didn't make an in-depth research on the detailed history factors. He just translates it into "Liu-an tea". It's the historical absence of it. Both of them adopt the foreignization but Hawkes' translation is much wiser and more accurate to help keep the local culture.

4.2. Literal Translation

The method of literal translation is an infrequent method in the translation because it often makes readers have no idea about the connotative meaning of words. In this part, the thesis focuses on the comparison between the literal translation and other methods. Translators could get inspired from it.

Example :妙玉笑说：“知道，这是老君眉。”

Version A: "I know you don't", said Adainantina with a smile. "This is Old Man' Eyebrows."

Version B: "I know," replied Miaoyu smiling. "This is Patriarch's Eyebrows."

"老君眉" is the white tea with silver tips produced on Jun Mountains besides Dongting Lake in Hunan province." [3] Both Hawkes and Yang Xianyi translated it into "eyebrow". Although it reveals the characteristics of the tea, it may surprise the readers. In fact, "老君眉" which has a lot of fuzz on the surface of the leaf as it looks like old man's eyebrows. There is another thing I also need to mention- "老君". "老君" in the version A just emphasizes the age of "老君"; however, "君" is the one of the most important titles which indicates someone's status. In Chinese culture, "老君" means old people who is high-minded with great virtue and lives a long and healthy life. Similarly, "Patriarch" in English culture means an old man who is respected as the head of a family or tribe. Patriarch in certain degree equals to "老君". The tea served by Miaoyu on one side shows her wishes for the longevity of Lady Jia; on the other side, it indicates Miao yu's cleverness. Although Hawkes has translated the characteristics of the tea, he ignores the origin and deviates from the key point of the translation. Yang Xianyi catches the key words and shows the more deep meaning of the words to the foreign people.

5. Conclusion

Under the situation of globalization, never have before people bound up with the rest of the world nowadays. China takes more active steps to reform and opening up. Under the Belt and Road Initiative, we are poised to transmit more traditional Chinese culture to reach mutual learning and understanding. Therefore, translators shoulder great responsibility to convey

Chinese splendid culture. In this thesis, I focus on the cuisine translation in Hong Lou Meng. This novel is recognized as the peak of the Chinese traditional literature. I make a study on the dish names that carry rich cultural connotations. "Translating is a cross-culture communication events, it concerns not only the transfer between languages, but also the transfer between cultures." [6] If the translation ignores the impact of the culture, the work of translation would have no value at all. The translation itself represents not only the language transformation, but the whole nation in all aspects. Thus, through the viewpoint of cultural-loaded dish names, I make a comparison between domestication and foreignization in Hawkes' and Yang's version. Based on the analysis of the specific examples, it is found that the use of foreignization is much more frequent than domestication. The foreignization maintains foreignness, enriching the expression in the target language. However, it may make target language readers troubled in understanding of original meaning of the writers. Domestication can transmit Chinese traditional culture much more accurately which helps readers of the target language fully understand the writers' connotative meaning, thus avoiding misunderstanding due to linguistic obstacles and cultural conflicts. Finally, the strategy of domestication could create efficient communication between the writers and target language readers. "These all prove that absolute domestication or foreignization is impossible to translate cultural-loaded words and expressions in literary works." [3] It is a hard as well as important task for translators to find a proper balance between foreignization and domestication. The integration of them will be a great tendency in the world translation of literary works.

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