

From the Perspectives of Syntactic and Analytic to Analyse Biancheng

-- Taking Shen Congwen's Biancheng and Yang Xianyi and Dai Naidie's Translated Version and Jeffrey C. Kinkley's Translated Version for Example

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Abstract

The characteristics of syntactic language use morphological changes to reflect the grammar relations. And Old English belongs to this group of language, which Modern English develops from it. Whereas, the analytic language doesn't use the morphological changes to reflect grammar relations, but uses the functional words and word order to show grammar relations. In English, there are morphological changes. So the word order is more flexible than Chinese. In this thesis, we compare Shen Congwen's Biancheng, Yan Xianyi and Dai Naidie's translation with Jin Jiefu's translation in order to gain deeper understanding of syntactic and analytic language. What's more, it will make us easier to disseminate Chinese culture and tell Chinese stories to foreigners.

Keywords

Biancheng; Syntactic language; Analytic language.

1. Introduction

1.1. Shen Congwen and Biancheng

Shen Congwen, formerly known as Shen Yuehuan, was born in 1902 in Fenghuang County, Hunan Province, a small, remote town on the border among Hunan, Sichuan and Guizhou provinces, where the Chinese and Miao live in mixed communities. The town was used by the Qing government to rule the Miao people of Zhenxi from 1700. Nearly a century after the bloody suppression of the Great Miao Uprising from 1795 to 1806, the passage of time has transformed the town into a romantic countryside of pleasant scenery. Shen Congwen's grandfather and father were both soldiers, and his military background, as well as the fusion of Han, Miao and Tujia blood, together with the beautiful and fresh natural scenery and the upright and simple people, nourished Shen Congwen's unique temperament.

In his childhood, truancy became one of the most colourful aspects of Shen Congwen's life. While receiving his private education, he skipped school, lied and played freely in the rolling hills, woods and rivers, watched farmers cut grain, caught grasshoppers, swam in the river, fought crickets with carpenters and watched shipbuilders repair old boats; looked left and right in the streets of Phoenix town and watched various craft workers: blacksmiths making ironware, apprentices making umbrellas, oil makers making oil, Miao people making bean curd and butchers killing umbrellas. The apprentices working together at the umbrella making workshop, the oil making workshop, the Miao people bean curd making, the butcher killing cattle, following the tenants to watch the hunting, watching the Miao people duel, the prison inmates going to dig the earth, the corpses at the killing place being tricked away by the dogs. The closeness to nature and the contact with the people of western Hunan not only let him

explore the subtle rarity of the natural scenery, but also let him appreciate the personnel The ordinary beauty of life. The nature of the world and the warmth of the human condition have influenced the formation of his character and created a man who is full of doubts and fantasies. The most wholesome and happy moments of his life would often appear in his dreams in later years, becoming the stories he would tell in his writing.

In his teenager years, his family fell through the cracks, so at the age of fifteen, Shen joined the army and drifted around the Hunan, Sichuan and Guizhou borders and the Yuan River valley, which stretched for thousands of miles, witnessing not only the bravery of the soldiers from Hunan, but also the indiscriminate killing and cruelty of the army. The five years of military service, the solitary gazing at the river banks of Chenzhou, the passing merchants and sailors he came into contact with, the many odd and secretive things he experienced, all made him feel lonely and isolated amid the hustle and bustle of the world. He left Phoenix city at the age of nineteen to work as a clerk and tax collector for the Zhijiang County Police Station and the Mission Defence Bureau; he was later cheated out of a large sum of money by his first love, a "white-faced girl", and her brother. At the age of twenty, he became a clerk in the General Department of the Western Hunan Patrol Army. At the age of twenty-one, he worked in a printing factory proofreading documents and received the "May Fourth" New Cultural Movement. In the book of society, he began to read and understand life.

I am really a countryman, and I am not proud to say that I am a countryman, nor am I being self-deprecating. As usual, countrymen have a deep-rooted and everlastingly country self-crafted temperament, love, hate and sorrow that has its own unique style, quite different from that of people in the city. Shen Congwen, who comes from a prestigious family, has always been known as a "countryman". This self-concept, which originated from his early upbringing, continued throughout his life and influenced his literary work.

1.2. Jin Jiefu's Translation

Jeffrey C. Kinkley's translation of *Biancheng*, was first released in a single-volume translation by Harper Collins Publishers in 2009, which was the first English translation of Shen Congwen's work to be published in a single volume and was part of the publisher's Modern Chinese Literature Classics series. The significance of Jin's translation is underscored by his status as a native American, "the first person to study Shen Congwen abroad" and the only "scholarly translator". Since its publication in 1934, *Biancheng* has been translated into more than 40 languages, including four English translations, and the first single volume of *Border Town*, translated by Jeffrey C. Kinkley, was published by Harper Collins in 2009, attracting widespread attention from Chinese scholars.

1.3. Yang Xianyi and Dai Naidie's Translation

Dai Naidie presented, in the United States, *Ten Essays on Modern Chinese Fiction* and made the image of China apparent by combining a specific historical setting with the story of a small town in western Hunan. Dai Naidie then further suggested that Shen Congwen transformed his radical approach to romance into an idyllic landscape between myth and history, giving *Xiangxi* a deep and quiet visual style that is reflected in his writing. In modern Chinese fiction, he is the first one who is able to do so.

2. The Contrast of Morphological Changes

Morphological change, that is the change in the form of a word, consists of two main aspects: the morphological construction of words and the morphological constructions of forms.

2.1. Morphological Construction of Words

There is a great deal of affixation in the construction of words, including prefixes and suffixes. English affixes are commonly used and are flexible. The original form of a verb can add different affixation. Therefore, it can make up different part of speech, for example, courage- courages- couraged- encourage- discourage. The following are some of the examples:

(1) Yang and Dai's: the path through the hills, like a bow-string, is slightly shorter.

Jin's: with the mountain path the bowstring, so the land distance was a little shorter. [1]

(2) Yang and Dai's: he uttered not a word of reproach but carried on quietly as if he knew nothing of the matter.

Jin's: but he said nothing, as if still unaware. [1]

In the first example, Yang's translation uses shorter; Jin's uses shorter. However, in the original text does not indicate a comparative meaning, but the comparative suffix -er in Yang's and Jin's translations reflects the fact that there is some difference between the stream when viewed from a distance and up close.

In the second example, Yang's translation uses "quietly" to indicate that the grandfather did things secretly, but only pretended not to know. Jin's translation uses a the negative prefix, such as "unaware", to indicate that the grandfather knew what was happening but was only reluctant to acknowledge his daughter's departure in his own mind.

It can be concluded that English mostly uses morphological changes to indicate morphological changes of words. Chinese, on the other hand, expresses the meaning of a sentence according to its meaning. All in all, from the morphological construction of words, Yang and Dai's translation are inclined to be analytic language, while Jin's translation is synthetic language.

2.2. Morphological Construction of Forms

Morphology refers to the change form of a word and the range of its reference, and there are different understanding of it: The change in form of a word that expresses grammatical meaning is called the morphological form. For example, the normative "he", and the object him. A change in the form of a word, called a morphological form. For example, in Chinese "think about", in English "greatness" is an adjective, and "greatness" is a noun). The following are some of the examples:

(1) Yang and Dai's: ferrying countless passengers in fifty years.

Jin's: In the fifty years since, there was simply no telling how many people he'd ferried across in that boat. [1]

(2) Yang and Dai's: Fate, in his case, is the girl at his side who makes him feel the lure of life at sunrise.

Jin's: It was the girl keeping him company who was Heaven's agent, letting him feel the power of life as the sun rose. [1]

In the first sentence, "fifty years" in the original does not indicate a morphological meaning change marker, but in Yang's and Jin's translation, the plural concept is indicated by the "-s" which indicates the plural meaning. This may indicate that Chinese is an analytical language and English is a synthetic language. In the second sentence, "he" in the original text can indicate the subject, object and all-comers. However, in English there is a morphological marker, and in both Yang's and Jin's translations 'him' is used to indicate the object case of "he".

From the above examples we can see that Chinese is an analytic language and expresses its meaning according to sentence meaning. English is a synthetic language, where prefixes and suffixes can be used to express meaning for grammatical effect, for example -s, -es, ed, -ing, etc., which indicate morphological meaning, can also be used to express morphological meaning for

grammatical effect, thus spreading the culture of translation and bringing the culture of Xiangxi in Border Town abroad, so that foreigners can understand Chinese culture.

3. Word Order of Biancheng

3.1. Inverted Order of Biancheng

There is a close relationship between morphological variation and inflectional order. The more morphological variation there is in a language, the more flexible the word order, and vice versa. Latin is a typical morphological language, where the grammatical meaning of words can be identified from their morphological markers even if they are moved in position, so its word order is flexible. Chinese is a typical analytic language, where words do not have morphological changes and their position cannot be moved at will, and the relationship between words is expressed mainly through the arrangement of the order of words and the use of function words. There are some morphological changes in English, and the order of words is changed so that it is possible to judge whether a sentence is grammatical by virtue of these morphological signs, but morphological changes are not as complete as in Latin, and the order of words cannot be changed arbitrarily. The following are some of the examples:

(1) Yang and Dai's: Sixteen youngsters, strong as young oxen,

Jin's: Sixteen strapping young men, strong as oxen, [1]

(2) Yang and Dai's: Low as the words were, he caught them, and realized that she was no more than a girl.

Jin's: She said it under her breath, but the boy heard it, and he could tell from her voice how young she was. [1]

In the first example, both Young's and King's translations use the inversion, "strong as young oxen", which is similar to "strong though young oxen", which is a part inversion in English. This is a part inversion in English, but in the original text it is used in normal order and is grammatically correct at this point. Jin's translation also uses the inversion of "only" at the beginning of the sentence, which requires the auxiliary verb to be placed in front of the subject, whereas in the original text the order of speech is normal and Tianbao should have been moving upwards on that day.

In the second example, Yang's translation uses, "low as the words are", as here it indicates a turn of phrase and requires the adjective to be brought forward, which is also a form of inversion. In Jin's translation, he uses the exclamation, how young she was, which is an exclamation inversion. However, in the original text, the normal order of speech is used.

This shows that English is a synthetic language and is good at using inversions to make the structure of sentences seem less cumbersome. While Chinese is an analytic language, which generally uses normal order.

3.2. Attributes of Biancheng

Whereas in Chinese the attribute generally precedes the noun, in English the attribute can in many cases be placed before or after the noun by morphological change or by means of linking words. The following are some of the examples:

(1) Yang and Dai's: She has the gentleness of a fawn and seems not to know the meaning of cruelty, anxiety or anger.

Jin's: Yet she was as docile and unspoiled as a mountain fawn, wholly unacquainted with cruelty, never worried, and never angry. [1]

(2) Yang and Dai's: Their coolness is not lost on the ferryman,

Jin's: The old ferryman took note of their coolness. [1]

In the first example, in Yang's translation is translated "as the gentleness of a fawn", which the "gentleness" is an adjective of "fawn", but in Yang's translation it is translated as a noun phrase, which belongs to another form of adjective as an attribute. However, in Jin's translation there is no postposition of the attribute, and only Yang uses the postposition of the attribute in the form of a phrase, which is a form of adjective phrase as a postpositional attribute. Also, in Chinese, adjectives are placed before nouns and there is no postposition.

In the second example, Yang's translation translates "indifferent" as "coolness", while Jin's translation translates it as "took note of their coolness", which belongs to the usage of the adjective as a postpositional attribute, and can also be expressed in this way, noticing the "cool impression", which is a case of the preposition of the adjective phrase. The position of adjectives in English is more flexible than in Chinese, as they can be either prepositioned or postpositioned.

3.3. Differences of Multilayer Logical Thinking in Biancheng

When expressing multi-layered logical thinking, English can make full use of the three main grammar tools --- morphological changes, word order and functional words, and often includes many modifying components or subordinate clauses in compound or long sentences, and the order of the parts of the sentence is more flexible. When Chinese expresses the same meaning, it is mainly with the help of sentence order and functional words, and is often used in short sentences, clauses, loose sentences, tight sentences, omitted sentences, running sentences, parallel sentences or compound sentences in parallel form, according to a certain order of time and reasoning, with first and second, main and secondary, layer by layer narration. The following are some of the examples:

(1) Yang and Dai's: and whoever catches one keeps it.

Jin's: Anyone who captured a duck got to keep it. [1]

(2) Yang and Dai's: So many eager spectators were milling round that she did not notice

Jin's: It was so crowded, with everyone straining to see what was happening on the river [1]

In the first example, Yang's translation uses the "and" conjunction to indicate the subordination, while Jin's uses "who", to make the logic of the sentence clearer.

In the second example, both Jin's and Yang's translations use a number of modifying elements and subordinate clauses to express logical problems. In Chinese, word order is used to express the meaning. This shows that English is more flexible in word order and often uses subordinate clauses to enhance logic. In Chinese, the meaning of a sentence is expressed mainly through word order. From this we can conclude that English is a synthetic language and Chinese is an analytical language.

4. Functional words of Biancheng

4.1. Articles of Biancheng

The article is an important word class in English that, although small in number, plays a crucial role in the use of language. The highest co-occurrences are found with the definite article, "the" the and the indefinite article "a/an". The article itself has no conceptual meaning and its meaning is only realized in the process of collocation with noun structures. It plays a key role in the contextualization of nouns and in the construction of the current mental space of the discourse. The following are some of the examples:

(1) Yang and Dai's: The stream winds down three li or so through the rocks to join the big river at Chatong, and once you cross the river it is only one li over the hills to the town.

Jin's: As the stream meandered on, it wrapped around a low mountain, joining a wide water at Chatong some three li downstream. [1]

(2) Yang and Dai's: To cross, all you need do is slip the hoop over the hawser and pull yourself slowly to the other side.

Jin's: To ferry across, one slowly tugged on that table, hand over fist, with the iron ring keeping the boat on track. [1]

In the first example, Yang's translation uses "the rocks" to refer to the rocks in the small stream, "the hills and the town", indicating the hills and town in the old town of Xiangxi. However, in Jin's translation, only the indefinite article "a wide water" is used to denote a large river.

In the second example, Yang's translation uses "the hoop", "the other side", to refer specifically to the iron ring that carries people from one side of the river to the other. In Jin's translation, he uses "the iron ring", "keeping the boat on track", to refer specifically to the iron ring, rowing Cui Cui and her grandfather's boat to the other side.

From the two examples above, we can see that English often uses both definite and indefinite articles, which is a feature of English. With the indefinite article, there is often a difference in the correctness or meaning of where and what to use the article. This is one of the difficulties for Chinese people to learn English. Because there is no article in Chinese, it can be omitted in English to Chinese translation, but in Chinese to English translation you have to add the articles. All in all these examples show that Chinese is analytic language, while English is synthetic language. Yang and Dai's translation tend to be synthetic language, whereas Jin's translation tend to be analytic language.

4.2. Chinese Modal Particles of Biancheng

The modal particle is a special category of words. It is usually placed at the end of a sentence or at a pause in a sentence to indicate the tone of speech, the attitude, which itself has no independent entity of meaning, but only to give some notional words or the whole sentence to some additional flavor and colour, with its vague lexical meaning and vividly evocative, with its exclusive grammatical meaning and determine the sentence structure, dominate the expression. The various tones can be divided into two main categories: those that express doubt and those that express unquestioning questions. In addition, there are those that express requests or commands, emotions, pauses in speech, and intonation. The declarative tone of voice is: "le, ba, ne in Chinese". The interrogative moods are "ba, ne, a in Chinese". The imperative words are "ba, ne, le, a in Chinese". There is no such word, modal particles, in English, and different tone auxiliaries are expressed in different forms in English. The following are some of the examples:

(1) Yang and Dai's: "Can grandad be dead?"

Jin's: "Could Grandpa be dead?" [1]

(2) Yang and Dai's: "Do you know the whole family?"

Jin's: Cuicui asked, "Do you know everyone in the family?" [1]

In the first example, the modal particle "ne" is used in the original text, but in Yang's and Jin's translations, it is translated as a question sentence led by "can", asking whether the grandfather has died, expressing doubt. In the second example, there is an modal particle "ma", where Cui Cui is curious about whether grandpa knows the Shunshun's family and whether he knows them well. From the above two examples, we can see that there are more modal particles in Chinese, while in English there are basically no modal particles to express tone, while English uses some sentences with different forms to express the modal particle in Chinese.

4.3. Prepositions of Biancheng

English prepositions are function words. Similar to Chinese prepositions, English prepositions are usually placed in front of the relevant noun or noun phrase in a sentence. Most idioms in English are formed by combining prepositions with other words. Therefore, prepositions are one of the most active and powerful combinations of words and phrases in the English language. Some common prepositions are particularly strong in combination with other words and can

mean a variety of different things. In both Chinese and English, prepositions cannot be used as sentence components alone, but can only exist in sentences when combined with other words to form prepositional phrases. The role played by a preposition in a sentence changes according to the position of the preposition in the sentence and the context. It is because English prepositions have a rich variety of meanings and flexible usage in sentences that it is important to understand their usage and the meaning they represent in sentences, as well as the differences between English and Chinese translations. The following are some of the examples: (1) Yang and Dai's: the fellow leaps ashore tossing a handful of coppers on to the boat, the hurries off grinning broadly.

Jin's: the traveler jumped up onto the dock and cast a handful of coppers back into the boat, smiling gleefully before hurrying off on his way. [1]

(2) Yang and Dai's: The fellow thrust a whole fistful of money at me. When I said I didn't want it, we had words. That's no way to behave!"

Jin's: He gave me money, a lot of it. I don't want his money! I told him that and still he bickered with me about it. He just wouldn't listen to reason!" [1]

In the first example, Yang's translation uses the prepositions "on to and off", which means "towards" and "leave" in the original text, but here the preposition is somewhat verbalized in the original text. In Jin's translation, "on to, into, and off" are used, with the first preposition meaning "up" in the original text, the second preposition meaning "inside", and the third preposition meaning "leave" in the original text. In the second example, Yang's translation uses prepositions such as at and to. "At" in the original text means towards, but "to" has no corresponding expression in the original text, which is a phrase. In Jin's translation, the preposition "of" is used in a grammatical sense to indicate belong to.

5. Conclusion and Prospect

5.1. Conclusion

The English translations of Biancheng by Yang Xiangyi, Dai Naidie and Jin Jiefu show that Shen Congwen's Biancheng tends to be analytical language, expressing the meaning of the text through sentence meaning. Yang and Jin's translation, on the other hand, favours the synthetic language, with many morphological changes and inversions more common in the translation. The position of the definite article is flexible, and English uses the usual modal particles and prepositions.

The differences between the English and Chinese translations can thus be seen, and it can be surmised that there is a great difference between the Chinese and English ways of thinking, with the English-speaking people valuing a more logical way of thinking, while the Chinese value emotional thinking.

5.2. Prospect

The process of learning a language is also to master a culture in a subtle way. Only when the majority of translators consciously infiltrate and integrate Chinese culture into their translations can foreigners fundamentally understand and learn Chinese, thus learning to communicate cross-culturally with the Chinese way of thinking, and to read and understand China and feel the charm of Chinese culture through the learning of Chinese. The difference between the Chinese and Western ways of translation better illustrates to us the need to tell the Chinese story, spread Chinese culture, let the world know China, let the world understand China, and let more foreigners come to China and contribute to our socialist cause. [2]

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