

A Study on the English Translation of Poetry in Governance Literature from the Perspective of Three Dimensional Transformation

Zhihua Gao

School of Foreign Languages, Jiangxi University of Technology, Nanchang 330098, Jiangxi, China

Abstract: *The translation of governance literature plays a crucial role in promoting the international community's understanding of China's domestic and foreign affairs, and is also an important medium for showcasing China's national image. The governance literature contains authoritative works that can comprehensively and systematically reflect the socialist ideology with Chinese characteristics in the new era, and one of the major features of the works is the vivid, profound, and appropriate use of poetry and verses. Thoroughly studying the poetry translations in English translations of governance literature is of great significance for us to better understand and disseminate the profound implications of governance concepts. This article attempts to analyze the English translation techniques of poetry in governance literature based on the three-dimensional transformation theory of ecological translation studies, and explore how translators can make their translations both conform to the expression habits of the target language, retain Chinese cultural characteristics, and accurately convey governance concepts.*

Keywords: Three-dimensional transformation; Governance literature; Poetry; English translation.

1. INTRODUCTION

In governance literature, a large number of ancient poems are often cleverly quoted to enrich and deepen the expression of governance concepts. The use of these ancient poems not only enhances the artistic quality of language, but also endows governance concepts with deeper cultural connotations. Translators require a high level of language proficiency and a deep understanding of governance concepts. Excellent translation not only enables English readers to better understand the Chinese model, but also allows them to feel the unique charm of Chinese culture, thereby helping to reduce barriers and misunderstandings between different civilizations.

Simple translation of ancient poetry focuses more on conveying the beauty and artistic conception of language, while in governance literature, the introduction of ancient poetry is mainly to better assist in conveying governance concepts, making language more vivid, specific, easy to understand and accept. Therefore, when dealing with ancient poetry in formal documents, translators need to grasp the relationship between governance concepts and ancient poetry, ensuring accurate communication of governance concepts while preserving the artistic charm and cultural connotations of ancient poetry as much as possible. This article attempts to analyze the translator's handling of ancient poetry in English translations of governance literature under the guidance of the three-dimensional transformation theory of ecological translation studies, and explore how to better assist in conveying governance concepts.

2. THREE DIMENSIONAL TRANSFORMATION THEORY

Ecological Translation Studies is an emerging discipline with Chinese characteristics, first proposed by domestic scholar Professor Hu Gengshen in 2001. Ecological translation studies take ecological holism as its concept, viewing translation activities as an ecosystem, emphasizing that translators should adapt to and choose the ecological environment during the translation process, and achieve ecological balance in translation. This includes the adaptive selection transformation of language, culture, and communication dimensions.

The transformation of language dimension is the most fundamental step in the translation process, which involves the adaptive selection and transformation of language forms. When translating, the translator should first pay attention to the grammatical differences between the two languages. These differences may include aspects such as word order, tense, voice, tone, sentence structure, etc. In order to accurately convey the information of the original text, the translator needs to have a deep understanding of the grammar rules of the source language and be proficient in the grammar structure of the target language. The transformation of cultural dimensions is an aspect

that cannot be ignored in the translation process. Due to cultural differences between different ethnic groups and countries, translators need to be fully aware of the impact of these differences on readers' understanding when translating. In the process of translation, translators need to pay attention to cultural elements in the source language, such as customs, beliefs, values, etc., and consider how to accurately convey these elements in the target language. The transformation of communicative dimension is the ultimate goal in the translation process. It emphasizes that translation is not only the conversion of language, but also the realization of communicative behavior. In the process of translation, the translator needs to pay attention to the communicative purpose of the text, namely the information, emotions, attitudes, etc. that the text intends to convey. In order to achieve the communicative purpose of the text, translators need to flexibly apply various translation methods and techniques, such as translation and rewriting, to make the translation more in line with the reading habits and acceptance psychology of the target language readers.

Under the framework of Professor Hu Gengshen's "*Three Dimensional Transformation Theory*", research on the English translation of poetry in governance literature can not only deepen our understanding of the three dimensions of language, culture, and communication transformation in the translation process, but also provide useful guidance for translation practice in the special field of poetry English translation. By deeply analyzing the translation skills and methods of translators in language, culture, and communication, we can better grasp the artistic charm and translation value of poetry translation, and make greater contributions to cultural exchange and governance concepts between China and foreign countries.

3. TRANSLATION OF POETRY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THREE DIMENSIONAL TRANSFORMATION

Due to the existence of cross-cultural differences, the translation of poetry in governance literature faces certain challenges. Firstly, Chinese and English belong to different language families, resulting in significant differences in language form and expression habits between the two. Secondly, the cultural differences between the East and the West result in different vocabulary expressions in both languages, which requires translators to find corresponding equivalent vocabulary when translating poetry. Finally, in the process of translating poetry, translators need to ensure that the selected translation conforms to the grammatical knowledge of the target language readers, resolves any confusion that may arise due to cultural differences, and faithfully conveys the communicative intent of the original text. Therefore, under the guidance of ecological translation studies, this study takes the English translation of governance literature as the research object, analyzes the English translation techniques of poetry from three dimensions: language, culture, and communication, and explores how to make the translation not only conform to the expression habits of the target language, but also accurately convey the governance concept without losing the source language culture.

3.1 Transformation of Language Dimension

Due to the fact that Chinese is an associative language that emphasizes coherence in meaning and the transmission of context, while English is a figurative language that emphasizes the completeness of sentence structure and the standardization of form, requiring complete subject, predicate, and other structures. Especially in Chinese poetry, the expression is concise and the length is short. Therefore, in the process of translating from Chinese to English, the method of amplification is usually used. In addition, due to differences in expression habits between Chinese and English, Chinese tends to use the active voice more, while English tends to use the passive voice. Therefore, when translating, it may be necessary to convert the voice in the original sentence and use voice conversion methods appropriately to make the translation more in line with language expression habits.

3.1.1 Amplification

Due to the frequent omission of conjunctions, subjects, predicates, and other sentence components in Chinese expression, translators often use the amplification to add conjunctions or complete these missing sentence components when translating these Chinese sentences into English to ensure the completeness, coherence, and accuracy of the translation. Especially when dealing with subjectless sentences in Chinese poetry, these sentences often express a universally applicable truth or emotion, and their meaning is not limited to a specific subject. Therefore, during the translation process, the translator may use words such as "a person" or "one" to supplement the subject, making the translation more in line with the expression habits of the English language while preserving the general meaning of the original sentence.

Example1: 立志而圣则圣矣，立志而贤则贤矣。(2020: 334)

Translation: a person who aspires to be a saint ...; and a person who aspires to be a sage (2020: 388)

Example2: 明镜所以照形，古事所以知今。(2020: 456)

Translation: One needs to clean the mirror before taking a look at oneself, and should learn the lessons of the past before making the decisions of today. (2020: 530)

Example 1 comes from the Ming Dynasty philosopher Wang Yangming's "*Rules for Students at Longchang*", in which he regarded aspiration as the first essential principle of learning. The citation of this poem in the literature points out that the ideals and beliefs of young people are related to the future of the country. There is no subject in the original text, which obviously does not conform to the expression habits of the English language. Although the target of this poem is young people, it is suitable for everyone. Therefore, the translator added the word "a person" as the subject in the first and second sentences of the translation, which conforms to the expression norms of English without losing the aesthetic beauty of the original poem, and achieves the transformation of language dimension.

Example 2 comes from Chen Shou's "*Biography of Sun Fen in the Wu Chronicles of the Records of the Three Kingdoms*" in the Western Jin Dynasty. The meaning expressed is to observe one's own face through a mirror and understand today's situation by studying ancient events. The original text emphasizes meaning and does not require a subject, while English emphasizes form to ensure the correct combination of subject verb in grammar, reflecting the logical relationship between the subject and the action. If this sentence is translated using the voice conversion method, the active voice is converted to the passive voice, and "the mirror" is used as the subject instead of "one", then it is inconsistent with the logical subject of "taking a look at oneself" afterwards. Therefore, adding "one" as the subject in the translation not only represents a widely recognized consensus in Chinese society that history is a mirror, but also aligns with the logical subject of "taking a look at oneself". The addition of the connecting word "and" between the two sentences makes the entire translation language form coherent and structurally complete.

3.1.2 Voice conversion

Voice refers to both active and passive voice. English tends to use passive voice more, while Chinese uses it relatively less. Even though there are passive words in Chinese, such as "被", their usage does not have a fixed form or uniform rules like in English. Therefore, when translating between Chinese and English, we usually need to adjust the voice to ensure that the translation conforms to the customary usage of each language, thus appearing more authentic and natural.

Example3: 唤起工农千百万，同心干。(2020: 94)

Translation: Workers and peasants are wakened (2020: 118)

The literature cites a poem by Mao Zedong, pointing out that this action consolidated a powerful force for our party to rely on the people to win victory. The original text lacks a subject, and we could have used the amplification to make the sentence structure complete. In order to highlight the subject of the people, workers, and peasants, and emphasize that the support and endorsement of the people are the most reliable source of strength for our party, the translator adopted the voice conversion method. The active voice in the original text was converted to the passive voice, and the "工农" were changed from objects to subjects. This not only conforms to the expression habits of the English language, but also accurately conveys the governance concept.

3.2 Transformation of Cultural Dimension

In the process of translation, translators should actively adapt to the cultural ecology of the source language and pay attention to the transmission of bilingual cultural connotations, in order to achieve the selection and transformation of cultural dimensions. Considering the significant cultural differences between China and English speaking countries, especially in the art form of poetry, the profound cultural connotations and unique expression techniques it contains may pose a certain level of comprehension challenge for English readers. Therefore,

translators need to accurately grasp the differences between Chinese and English cultures, choose translations that are in line with the cultural background of English speaking countries, and thus reduce the difficulty of understanding for English readers. In order to preserve the traditional cultural characteristics of the poetry in the literature, the translator used translation methods such as equivalence and amplification, which help English readers better understand the cultural connotations of the original poem and enhance the auxiliary role of the translation in conveying governance concepts.

3.2.1 Equivalent translation

The equivalent translation method refers to directly or indirectly corresponding the expression of one language to another language, in order to maintain the original meaning, emotional color, or metaphorical form. If certain expressions in poetry can find corresponding words in English, and the words are familiar to English readers, the translator will adopt the equivalent translation method, which means directly using the corresponding words in English to replace the poetry expression. This translation method helps to maintain the artistic conception and meaning of the original text, while making the translation more authentic and easy to understand. Through the method of equivalent translation, translators can build a bridge between different languages, allowing English readers to appreciate the cultural charm and profound meaning of Chinese poetry.

Example 4: 亦余心之所善兮，虽九死其犹未悔。(2020: 248)

Translation: ..., I will not regret a thousand deaths to die. (2020: 290)

This poem is from Qu Yuan's "Li Sao" during the Warring States period, which means "These are all precious things in my heart. Even if I die nine times (or more), I will not regret it." The citation of this poem in literature calls on scientific and technological workers to have strong confidence and determination in innovation. The word "九" in the original text is just an ordinary number in mathematics, but in traditional Chinese culture, it usually means "many". The translation does not directly translate it as "nine" or "many", but uses the English equivalent word "a thousand" to express confidence and determination in independent innovation. Adaptively selecting translation to help readers understand the cultural connotations of the original text.

3.2.2 Amplification

As a treasure of Chinese culture, ancient poetry often incorporates rich historical allusions, which have profound cultural connotations and unique expressions in the Chinese context. However, for English readers, due to a lack of understanding of the relevant historical and cultural background, the connotations of these allusions are often difficult to understand and appreciate directly. Translators often use the method of amplification to supplement cultural background, provide certain explanations or annotations, so that foreign readers can have a more thorough understanding of the connotation of Chinese culture and achieve cultural adaptation and transformation.

Example 5: 尧有欲谏之鼓，舜有诽谤之木。(2020: 316)

Translation: Emperor Yao set up a drum ..., and Emperor Shun (2020: 369)

This poem comes from "Lü Shi Chunqiu: Self-Knowledge", in which the "欲谏之鼓" refers to a piece of land outside the court where Emperor Yao specially set up a drum. Whenever someone beats the drum to advise, he will come out to receive them. The "诽谤之木" refers to the establishment of the Wood of Defamation by Emperor Shun after Emperor Yao, encouraging the public to leave messages, express critical opinions and improvement suggestions. The translator did not directly translate "尧" and "舜" as "Yao" and "Shun", but added the word "Emperor", so that foreign readers can naturally understand that rulers from ancient times to the new era have always attached importance to public opinion and created a good public opinion environment, which is a major event in governing the country and ensuring national security.

3.3 Transformation of Communicative Dimension

From the perspective of ecological translation studies, adaptive transformation is not limited to the level of language and cultural dimensions, but also covers the adaptive transformation of communicative dimensions. To ensure that the translation can truly achieve the expected communicative effect, the purpose of translating

governance literature is to make the world better understand China's governance concept. As one of the major features, poetry citation plays a good auxiliary role in conveying governance concepts. To achieve the transformation of communicative dimensions, translators usually use free translation methods in poetry translation. The core of free translation lies in conveying the deep meaning of the original text, rather than being confined to the literal form of the original text. The use of some poetic lines in governance literature has increased the difficulty of translation to a certain extent, and translators often need to balance the relationship between form and meaning. When the preservation of the form of these poetic lines affects the integrity of the overall meaning, translators usually choose to use the technique of free translation. This means that the translator will abandon the literal form of the poem and focus on conveying its inherent meaning to ensure that the translation can be understood and accepted by English readers while maintaining the essence of the original text. Through this approach, free translation not only helps to overcome language barriers, but also promotes communication and understanding between different cultures.

Example 6: 孔子登东山而小鲁，登泰山而小天下。(2020: 440)

Translation: ..., the local Kingdom of Lu comes into view; ..., the whole land comes into view. (2020: 511)

Originating from "*The Book of Mencius: The Cultivation of the Mind to Its Utmost*", it was written by Mencius, a philosopher, politician, and educator during the Warring States period. The citation of this poem in the literature aims to call on everyone to climb high and look far, correctly understand and grasp the world trend and the trend of the times. In the original text, "小鲁" refers to the state of Lu becoming smaller, while "小天下" refers to the world becoming smaller. However, the translation does not directly translate it as "become small", but rather conveys its inherent meaning, which is translated as "come into view", referring to a person's perspective. The viewpoint must constantly seek breakthroughs, and in the face of the new situation of great development, changes, and adjustments in the world, it is necessary to accurately grasp the world trend and the trend of the times. For the "鲁" in the original text "小鲁", the translator used the method of amplification "the local Kingdom of Lu" to introduce the cultural background of "鲁". This not only accurately conveys the deep meaning of the poetry and prose, but also significantly improves the readability of the translation, making it effective in communication.

Example 7: 太上有立德，其次有立功，其次有立言。(2020: 325)

Translation: The highest attainment is to exemplify virtue; the second highest is to perform great deeds; the third highest is to put forth noble ideas. (2020: 379)

The literature cites a poem from "*Zuo's Commentary*", in which "太上" is translated as "The highest". The original text contains two "其次". If both are directly translated as "the second highest", readers will only be confused and unable to understand its meaning. In order to clearly express the different levels of achievements represented by "立德", "立功", and "立言" in the text, the translator translates the second "其次" as "the third highest", reflecting the hierarchical sense of the entire poem. The first is to establish virtue, the second is to establish achievements, and the third is to establish theories. If this sentence is directly translated, it may confuse English readers because the words "立德", "立功", and "立言" in the original text do not have direct corresponding vocabulary in English. However, a free translation can accurately convey the meaning of the original text, making it clear to readers and achieving the purpose of communication.

4. CONCLUSION

This article conducts empirical research on the English translation of poetry in governance literature under the guidance of three-dimensional transformation theory. The translator used the methods of amplification and voice conversion in the language dimension to ensure the completeness of the translated sentences and language expression habits. In terms of cultural transformation, the main methods used are equivalent translation and amplification. For poems with corresponding English expressions, the translator uses equivalent translation. For poems with significant cultural differences, amplification is used to supplement and explain their cultural connotations, so that readers can understand both one and the other, achieving cultural balance in the translation ecology and accurately conveying the governance concept to the target language readers. In the transformation of communicative dimensions, translators adopt the method of free translation to handle poetry in order to ensure effective communication. By using three-dimensional transformation, the translation can conform to the language

expression habits of the target language, accurately convey the cultural connotations of the original text, and effectively convey governance information.

FUND PROJECT

Relevant research results of the Ministry of Education's Humanities and Social Sciences Research Youth Fund Project: *Translation and Communication of Cultural Load Words in Chinese Political Discourse* (No. 23YJC740032).

REFERENCES

- [1] Hu Gengshen. Translation Methods Based on the Adaptation-Selection Theory [J]. Chinese Translators Journal, 2003.
- [2] Hu Gengshen. An Overview of Translation Adaptation and Selection Theory from the Perspective of Terminology [J]. Shanghai Journal of Translators, 2008(2): 1-5.
- [3] Xi Jinping. Xi Jinping: The Governance of China III [M]. Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 2020.
- [4] Yu Yue. A Study on the English Translation of Expressions with Chinese Characteristics from the Perspective of Eco-translatology [D]. Chengdu: University of Electronic Science and Technology of China, 2020.
- [5] Yuan Xin. A Study on the English Translation of Political Theory Texts from the Perspective of Eco-translatology: A Case Study of What Can the Chinese Path Contribute to the World [J]. Chinese Translators Journal, 2021(06): 134-140.
- [6] Zhang Jian. Thoughts on the Communicative Effectiveness of External Propaganda from the Perspective of Eco-translatology [J]. Shanghai Journal of Translators, 2020(04): 52-56.
- [7] Zhang Hao. A Study on the English Translation of Xi Jinping's Political Speeches from the Perspective of Eco-translatology [D]. Wuxi: Jiangnan University, 2020.

Author Profile

Zhihua Gao (1976-), female, from Nanchang, Jiangxi Province, Jiangxi University of Technology, associate professor, master's degree. Research direction: Translation Studies Detailed address: J3-405, Yaohu Campus, Jiangxi University of Technology, No. 115 Ziyang Avenue, Nanchang City, Jiangxi Province. Email: 330098. Phone: 13870831203. Email: 21591856@qq.com