

The English Translation of Poetry - Deer Song from the Perspective of Eco-translatology

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Abstract: *This study applies the "three-dimensional transformation" theory of Eco-translatology to analyse in depth the English translation of "The Song of the Deer". The study focuses on the adaptive selection of linguistic, cultural and communicative transformations, aiming to reveal how the translation crosses linguistic and cultural barriers and conveys the original text's phonetic beauty, cultural connotation and communicative intent. By exploring examples of English translations of Deer Song, the paper demonstrates how translators strategically make linguistic and cultural adaptations while maintaining the aesthetic qualities and cultural values of the original text. The study emphasises that future translation research and practice should continue to pay attention to the complexity of intercultural communication and develop translators' intercultural communicative competence in order to promote understanding and respect among different cultures.*

Keywords: Eco-translatology; The Book of Psalms; Three-dimensional transformation.

1. INTRODUCTION

The core of the strategy of "going out" of Chinese culture lies in telling fascinating Chinese stories, in which translation plays an indispensable role. Nowadays, culture is "an important soft power to improve a country's international status and image, and an important medium for foreign exchange and cultural dissemination" (Ma Xiaodai, 2017). Although the rise of artificial intelligence has brought new controversies and challenges to the field of translation, literary translation is still a high ground that is difficult for AI to conquer, and the heavy responsibility of spreading Chinese culture still falls on the shoulders of the majority of translators. The Book of Poetry marks the starting point of ancient Chinese poetry, which is not only a treasure in the literary treasury, but also deeply reflects the cultural spirit of ancient China. Translating this classic into English is crucial to promoting the global spread of Chinese culture. This translation process is not just a simple conversion of words, but involves a deeper transmission of culture and a reinterpretation of meaning, aiming to enable readers around the world to appreciate the rich connotations and unique charms of the Book of Songs.

Eco-translatology, as a local Chinese interdisciplinary translation theory proposed by Professor Hu Gengshen, defines translation as "the translator's choice of activities to adapt to the ecological environment of translation", stressing that translation activities should take into account the ecological structure of the original text and reproduce this ecology in the target language in order to realise the sustainable development of the culture (Hu Gengshen, 2008). The theory summarises the translation method as a "three-dimensional" transformation, i.e. "adaptive selection transformation focusing on the linguistic, cultural and communicative dimensions" (2011). In translation practice, translators need to make accurate adaptive choices in the three dimensions of language, culture and communication, i.e. not only do they need to pursue naturalness and fluency in language conversion, but also maintain sensitivity and respect in cultural transmission to ensure accurate expression of cultural elements. In addition, translators also need to pay attention to the communicative intentions of the original text to ensure that these intentions are effectively conveyed in the translated text to achieve smooth cross-cultural communication. The adaptive choice of Eco-translatology theory reflects the translator's strategic thinking in the translation process, aiming to achieve harmony between the original text and the translated text. Under the guidance of this theory, the translator's subjectivity is strengthened, requiring the translator to pay attention not only to the correspondence of words in the translation process, but also to consider in-depth the cultural context of the translation, poetic beauty and readers' acceptance, so as to make sure that the translation can not only convey the deeper cultural connotations of the original poem, but also adapt to the cultural ecology of the target language, so as to achieve cross-cultural communication and understanding. This paper attempts to analyse and appreciate Wang Fanglu's adaptations and choices in translating the poem "The Song of the Deer" through the perspective of "three-dimensional" transformation under the care of Eco-translatology.

2. OVERVIEW AND TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF "THE SONG OF THE DEER" IN THE BOOK OF SONGS

As one of the "Four Beginnings", the poem "Deer Song" in "Shijing-Yasong" has always attracted the attention of scholars, which has given rise to "Thorny Poetry", "Swallow Music" and "Offering Rituals". This has given rise to a variety of interpretations, such as the "Thorny Poem", "Yan Music", and "Entertainment Ritual" (Feng Maomin, 2018). Among them, the "Yan music theory", which considers "Deer Song" to be a musical song used for banquets, is recognised by most scholars, who regard the "guests" in the poem as courtiers. The poem vividly depicts the ideal of harmony between the ruler and his ministers in ancient China with its melodious recurring refrain of "Yo Yo Deer Song" and its profound mood. In Mr Wang Fanglu's Explorations in the Double Translation of the Poetry Scriptures into Vernacular English, this point is also mentioned in the notes and explanations attached to the translation of the poem. This note not only helps "undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral students studying foreign languages" and "foreign friends" mentioned in the preface to gain a deeper understanding of traditional Chinese culture, but also shows that the translator has adopted the viewpoints of the Preface to the Poetry of Mao, which is that "Yanle Said" (Wang Fanglu, 2013: 2).

2.1 Linguistic Dimension

The so-called conversion of "linguistic dimension" means "the translator's adaptive choice of language form conversion in the translation process" (Hu Gengshen, 2011). In poetry translation, the linguistic dimension focuses on the transformation of phonetics, vocabulary and syntax. As the first general collection of poetry in ancient China, the Shijing, with its beautiful rhymes and rich vocabulary, fully reflects the regional characteristics of the Western Zhou and even the Spring and Autumn Period. Therefore, translating the phonetic beauty of the Book of Songs has also become an important difficulty.

In terms of rhyme, the original text of the Book of Songs has as many as eleven forms of rhyme, including "even rhyme", "first line into rhyme", "cross rhyme", "hold rhyme. There are as many as eleven forms of rhyme, including "even rhyme", "first line in rhyme", "interlocking rhyme", "holding rhyme", "sparse rhyme", "distant rhyme", "superimposed rhyme", and "loop", "coda", and "no rhyme" (Li Yuliang, Wang Chong, 2018). In the poem "Shijing - Xiao Ya - Deer Song" alone, three types of rhymes are used: cross-rhyme, superimposed rhyme, and cyclic rhyme. Cross-rhyme is expressed as "odd-numbered lines rhyme with odd-numbered lines, and even-numbered lines rhyme with even-numbered lines", e.g., "Youyou deers singing, eating apples in the wild" and "I have a guest, drumming and blowing the sheng" in which "apples" is used. For example, the words "苹" and "笙" in "呦呦鹿鸣，食野之苹" and "我有嘉宾，鼓瑟吹笙" form a rhyme scheme. Superimposed rhyme refers to "the repetition or partial repetition of verses within a chapter", for example, "drumming the sheng, blowing the sheng, blowing the sheng and drumming the reed". Loop refers to the repetition of the same words and phrases in different chapters of a poem, such as "Yo Yo Deer Song" and "I have a guest" at the beginning of this poem. Despite the complexity of the rhythmic system of the Book of Songs, translators still need to transform the language dimension in the translation process, in an effort to convey the phonetic beauty of the original text.

Original: 呦呦鹿鸣，食野之苹。我有嘉宾；
呦呦鹿鸣，食野之蒿。我有嘉宾；
呦呦鹿鸣，食野之芩。我有嘉宾，

Translation: The cry of deer is for their peers,
They are grazing in the fields.
I have so many good guests,

Rhyme is shown here in the cyclical nature of the poem as well as in the overlapping rhymes within each stanza. In the original, the odd and even lines rhyme, while "Yo Yo Deer Song, Eating Apples in the Wild. I have a guest; Yo Yo Deer singing, eating wild artemisia. I have a guest; Yo Yo Deer Song, Eat the Scutellaria of the Wild. I have a guest" are repeated throughout the poem, forming a loop, creating a rhythmic cycle and rhythmic echo. In the translation practice, the translator cleverly transforms these three lines into the same translation, and at the same time, by changing the sentence pattern and vocabulary, he not only preserves the beauty of the original poem's rhyme, but also adapts to the expression habits of English declarative sentences. In addition, the translator adds the information "for their peers", which helps the target language readers to understand. The translation reflects the adaptive choice of linguistic transformation, i.e., the appropriate adjustment and innovation of linguistic forms

without sacrificing the rhyme and meaning of the original text. The translator has not only achieved cross-cultural conversion on the linguistic level, but also maintained the original poem's rhyming characteristics of iambic pentameter and rhyme, so that the translation can also show the original poem's sense of rhythm and musicality in the English context.

Original: 鼓瑟吹笙，吹笙鼓簧，

Translation: We play music harmoniously.
Harmony is among all of us,

The phrase "blowing the sheng" here forms a superimposed rhyme scheme, which has a phonetic beauty. The original poem depicts a scene in which musicians play music while the host hosts a banquet for all the guests, aiming at highlighting the harmonious banquet atmosphere between the monarch and his subjects, in which the hosts and the guests enjoy each other's company and are in harmony. If the translation merely lists the instruments played, the target language readers may not be able to understand the cultural meaning behind the ceremony and the friendship and joy it conveys. Therefore, the translator cleverly used the words "harmoniously" and "harmony", which not only retained the phonetic beauty of the original text, but also deeply interpreted the implicit message of "the guests and hosts enjoying each other's company". not only retains the phonetic beauty of the original text, but also deeply interprets the implicit message of "the guests and the hosts are happy" in the original text, thus strengthening the harmonious atmosphere embodied in the poem. While the original text expresses harmony through the concrete movements of musical instruments, the translation directly uses abstract words to express this concept. This choice of vocabulary from concrete to abstract fully reflects the adaptive transformation of the linguistic dimension, which helps readers to understand the poem without sacrificing the meaning of the original text and makes the linguistic form more in line with the expression habits and aesthetic expectations of English.

2.2 Cultural Dimension

The so-called "cultural dimension" means that "in the process of translation, the translator pays attention to the transmission and interpretation of bilingual cultural connotations" (Hu Gengshen, 2011). This requires the translator, when conveying the cultural connotations of the source text, not only to be faithful to the original text, but also to take into full consideration the cultural background, receptivity and comprehension ability of the target language readers. This kind of conversion reflects the translator's initiative and creativity in translation practice. By carefully selecting and adapting the cultural elements, the translator needs to ensure the accurate transmission of information and the appropriate embodiment of cultural values in cross-cultural communication.

原作: 呦呦鹿鸣.....我有嘉宾。

译文: The cry of deer is for their peers, I have so many good guests,

In the original text, "Yo Yo Deer Singing" is not only a description of the sound of deer singing, but also implies the meaning of harmony and joyful gathering in the ancient Chinese banquet culture. Yue Hong (1999) points out that there are many interpretations of the image of "deer" in Xiao Ya - Deer Song, in which he mentions that deer is a representative of the ancient religious and ceremonial culture, and in this poem, it also represents ceremonies and joy. However, target language readers usually do not have such cultural presuppositions and may not be able to understand the deeper meaning of this imagery. Therefore, the translator has made a certain degree of innovation while maintaining the cultural connotation of the original text. The translator adds the purpose of the deer's cry as "The cry of deer is for their peers", which conveys a kind of inter-group echo and connection, and subtly metaphorically refers to the guests of honour in the latter part of the text. The use of the word "peers" not only preserves the echo between the cries of deer in the original text, but also implies the harmonious relationship between the "good guests" in the following text, which is consistent and helps the target language readers to understand the meaning of the imagery of "deer". The use of the word "peers" not only preserves the echo between the deer in the original text, but also implies the harmonious relationship between the "good guests" in the following text.

Original: 食野之苹；食野之蒿；食野之芩

Translation: They are grazing in the fields.

The original text lists three plants, "applesauce", "artemisia" and "scutellaria", which often symbolise nature, simplicity and vitality in the Chinese cultural context. The translation does not correspond to each of these specific plant names, but cleverly adopts the general expression "grazing in the fields". This translation strategy simplifies the cultural imagery and makes it easier for the target language readers to construct a picture without having to delve into the specific meaning of each plant. Although the translation does not directly translate the specific plants in the original text, the translator not only conveys the behaviour of the deer in the original text through the action of "grazing", but also creates an atmosphere of tranquillity, harmony and coexistence with nature, which is completely in line with the atmosphere created in the original text through the list of plants, thus achieving a cultural dimension shift.

Original: 鼓瑟鼓琴

Translation: We play harps and become young.

The phrase "drums and qin" in the original text depicts the playing of musical instruments at ancient banquets, both of which are ancient Chinese stringed instruments. The translator chooses to use "harp" to correspond, not only because "harp", as an ancient and widely known stringed instrument in English culture, can evoke similar cultural resonance to the original poem, but also reflects the translator's deep understanding of the target language and cultural environment, and her understanding of the original poem. It also reflects the translator's deep understanding of the target language's cultural environment and respect for the spirit of the original work, which fully embodies the conversion of the cultural dimension.

Original: 承筐是将

Translation: Baskets of gifts are not enough.

Baskets of gifts are not enough. The word "baskets" in the original "承筐是将" refers to ancient bamboo baskets, which are common to the Western word basket in terms of material and use, while "将" means to carry or give away. to carry or give away. However, the translator does not directly translate gift, but uses "are not enough" to convey that the gifts in the original text are so many that they cannot be carried in a single container, thus reflecting the abundance of the gifts and the depth of the friendship. The word "are not enough" in the translation is an expansion and strengthening of the meaning of the original, which not only retains the cultural connotation of the original, but also adds a layer of meaning, that is, no matter how many gifts there are, they cannot fully express the respect and emotion of the giver. This expression is adapted to the English expression habit and realises the conversion of cultural dimension.

Original: 人之好我，示我周行。

Translation: I cannot pay back your devotion.
You have directed me right way.

In the original text, "People's kindness to me" expresses the goodwill and good feelings of others towards the poet, while "Show me the right way" implies that others have shown the "me" in the poem the right way of behaviour or moral code. In the translation, "your weekly behaviour" means that others show the "me" in the poem the right way of behaviour or moral code. The words "your devotion" and "directed me right way" in the translation convey similar feelings of gratitude and recognition of guidance, reflecting an accurate transmission of the original's emotions and favours. In addition, the translation does not mechanically reproduce the original "周行", but provides an innovative interpretation adapted to the target culture. "The translation "directed me right way" not only retains the guiding significance of the original text, but also adds a layer of metaphor for the guidance of the right path in life, which is more in line with the English language habits and cultural background. Such a conversion not only makes the translation semantically consistent with the original, but also culturally closer to the understanding and perception of English readers, realising the conversion of cultural dimension.

2.3 Communicative Dimension

The so-called "communicative dimension" of translation, i.e., "the translator pays attention to the adaptive selection of bilingual communicative intentions in the translation process", suggests that the translator also needs

to pay attention to the communicative dimension when translating, and try to make sure that the communicative intentions of the original text can be embodied in the translation (Hu Gengshen, 2011). In the process of translation, the translator needs to have a deep understanding of the communicative cultures of the source language and the target language, and show initiative and creativity in the process of translation in order to achieve an effective communicative transformation.

Original: 我有旨酒，以燕乐嘉宾之心

Translation: And we will drink the wine, cheers!

The phrase "And we will drink the wine, cheers!" in the original expresses the host's intention to provide the guests with fine wine for their pleasure, which is a typical communicative behaviour of banquets. The phrase "And we will drink the wine" in the translation directly conveys this behaviour, while "cheers!" is a common toast in English to encourage guests to raise their glasses together, which enhances the communicative intent of the original text. By using "cheers!", the translator not only conveys the sense of hospitality in the original, but also creates a cheerful and enthusiastic banquet atmosphere. This expression is in line with the banquet custom in English culture, which makes the communicative effect of the translation in the target language more distinct. In this communicative dimension transformation, the translator shows initiative and creativity in the translation process, and the choice of appropriate vocabulary makes the translation maintain the original mood while adapting to the communicative habits of the target language.

3. CONCLUSION

Translation is not only the direct translation of words, but also a kind of cross-cultural communication behaviour, aiming at conveying the deep meaning and aesthetic qualities of the original text. In this paper, we use the "three-dimensional transformation" theory of Eco-translatology as a framework to analyse the transformation of linguistic, cultural and communicative dimensions in the translation process of *The Book of Poetry - The Sound of Deer*. In the linguistic dimension, the translator maintains a kind of musicality and fluency in English through the meticulous treatment of the original text's rhythms and rhymes. For example, by choosing words such as "harmoniously" and "harmony", the translation not only conveys the harmony of the original text, but also enhances the expressive power of the language. In the cultural dimension, the translator understands the cultural background of the original text and conveys the corresponding cultural values in the translation. In the communicative dimension, the translator pays attention to the communicative intention and purpose of the original text, and effectively conveys the banquet atmosphere and hospitality in the original text through the use of toasts such as "cheers!", so that the translation matches the original text in terms of communicative function.

Translation activity is a dynamic and constantly evolving field, which requires translators to have not only linguistic skills, but also profound cultural understanding and communicative strategies. "One of the direct consequences of economic globalisation on the cultural world is cultural globalisation" (Wang Ning, 2000). In today's globalisation, translation activities have become an important means of promoting international cooperation and enhancing cultural mutual trust. With the rapid development of information technology, translation tools are becoming more efficient and precise. These tools can provide great convenience in dealing with daily translation tasks, especially in large-scale text translation and multilingual project management. However, the performance of machine translation is still unsatisfactory in the face of semantically ambiguous and culturally loaded literary texts or traditional canonical books. Zhao Tao (2021) points out that machine translation still performs poorly when dealing with "more creative and unfamiliar literary works such as novels, poems, dramas, etc., or semantically ambiguous texts", so human intervention and editing become indispensable. This mode of post-translation editing not only improves the quality of the translated text, but also reaffirms the key position of the translator in linguistic reconciliation and cultural embellishment.

For the international dissemination of Chinese culture, it is indispensable to use diversified translation strategies in the translation process. Effective translation strategies, such as Ge Haowen's abridged translation, are made by the translator "based on his subjective understanding of the original text and the purpose of the translation, taking into account the selective tendency of the commercial publisher and the acceptance preference of the readers of the target language and combining various factors", which not only accurately conveys China's stories, values, and developmental concepts to the world, but also enables the translator to communicate Chinese culture across cultures. Translation strategies can not only accurately convey China's stories, values and development concepts to the world, but also build bridges of understanding and friendship between different cultures (Hu Zuoyou, 2024).

The translator's role is no longer limited to language conversion, but is also a reconstructor of cultural meanings and a re-creation of communicative intentions. As Zhao Tao (2021) emphasises, post-translation editing of machine translation has become a basic skill that translators must master, and its core task is to achieve the expected communicative effect and cultural acceptance of the translated text through manual proofreading and embellishment in different usage environments. Therefore, translators play the role of cultural communicators and facilitators in this process, and their work is of great significance in enhancing the international influence of Chinese culture. Through continuous learning and practice, translators can improve the quality of their translations, promote understanding and respect among different cultures, and help Chinese civilisation "go out".

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