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ON THE TRANSLATION STRATEGIES OF CHINESE CLASSICS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ARTHUR WALEY'S ENGLISH VERSION OF *THE ANALECTS*

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ABSTRACT

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Arthur Waley's translation version of *The Analects* has a great influence nowadays. It's a typical case study of Chinese classics translation strategies. This paper discusses the merits and demerits of Arthur Waley's translation version from two aspects: semantic and syntax, and then summarizes the standards of Chinese classics translation. At last, this paper discusses the translation strategies of Chinese classics.

1. INTRODUCTION

With China's international status improving, it is urgent to carry forward the Chinese culture to the world. Chinese classics is an important part of the world civilization, the most famous part is the Confucian culture [1]. A successful example is The Confucius Institutes around the world. The most famous literature of Confucian culture is *The Analects*. Many foreign Confucian culture lovers study *The Analects* through reading the translation versions [2]. The most popular version accepted by most people is translated by Arthur Waley. From his translation version, we can learn a lot, such as the strategies and the standards of Chinese classics translation. This paper talks about the translation version of *The Analects* from two aspects: semantic and syntax, and then summarizes the standards of Chinese classics translation. At last, this paper discusses the translation strategies of Chinese classics.

2. THE ANALYSIS OF ARTHUR WALEY'S TRANSLATION VERSION

2.1. The Merits of Arthur Waley's Version

The Analects is one of the most influential Chinese classics in history. It's translated into other languages and known by the world [3]. As search results suggest, there are many influential translation versions of *The Analects*, excluding foreign scholar's versions. Arthur Waley's version has a great influence, his translation version is widely accepted today. Publications of Arthur Waley's version has achieved up to thousands of copies. Arthur Waley's translation version of *The Analects* is typical, it is a representative of Chinese classic translation strategies study, and those strategies can be applied to other Chinese classics translations, too.

As an influential translation version of Chinese classics in the west, this book has some merits, and here are some instances.

曰：“古之学者为己，今之学者为人。”（宪问第十四：25）The Confusions said, in the ancient time, people study for self-improvement. On the converse, nowadays, people study in order to impress other people. He has an exact understanding of the two concepts of“为己”and“为人”，and he chose the two expressions“self-improvement”and“in order to impress other people”. It is a typical example of interpretative translation.

2.2. The Demerits of Arthur Waley's Version

Statistics suggests that at least 26 chapters totally misinterpret the meaning of original text, examples are below:

仲弓为季氏宰，问政。子曰：“先有司，赦小过，举贤才……”（子路第十三：2）Jan Yung, after having become steward of the Chi Family, asked about government. The Master said, Get as much as possible done first by your subordinates. Pardon small offenses, pardon men of superior capacities...Compared with: Zhong gong was serving as steward in the House of Ji, and asked about governing effectively [4]. The Master said to him, “Set an example yourself for those in office, pardon minor offences, and promote those with superior character and ability.” “Get as much as possible done first by your subordinates” is not the right understanding of the original text, the right expression should the second one.

Totally wrong translations and partly wrong translations add up to about 126 chapters, up to twenty five percent of the whole book. So, Arthur Waley's translation version does not have great value nowadays. The statistics is on the basis of authoritative translation of *The Analects*. Splendid sentences in *The Analects* with different understandings just like one thousand readers have one thousand Hamlets [5]. It is normal that divergences and contradictions appear in Chinese classics translation, we cannot divide it into wrong translations.

3. THE NECESSITIES OF CHINESE CLASSICS TRANSLATION

3.1. The Role of Chinese Civilization in the World Civilization

It is universally acknowledged that industrious and wise Chinese people have made great contribution to the world. Huaxia civilization and Chinese character and culture have a long and profound history. History books written in Chinese (i.e., all previous dynasties authoritative work in all field) are rare and precious, and they are spiritual wealth of all mankind [6]. Our Chinese people should take it as our duty to spread Chinese culture to the world under the circumstance of growing number of Chinese and foreign culture exchanges. Foreigners equipped with high Chinese level are longing to know more about Chinese cultures, but only few of them really understand Chinese culture. Chinese language is one of eight official languages of the United Nations, and it is learned by more people. But it is impossible for Chinese globalization. On the contrary, English is the most influential and widely used language.

3.2. The Importance of Chinese Classics Translation to the World

Culture transmission can be quantified. Statistics shows there are more than thirty-five thousand series of Chinese classics in China, but only few of them translated into other languages. Take America for instance, it only has two hundred years of history while China has more than five thousand years. As for the proportion of literature products that have translated into other languages, America is bigger than China. In the 20th century, there is a serious imbalance of Chinese and foreign culture exchanges. Chinese scholars came up with translation systems of foreign literature under the efforts of all Chinese translators and scholars, thus famous literary works of the West has been widely and systematic translated. It is one of the most important features of culture transmission in the 20th century. On the contrary, 20th century is the beginning when the west scholars are aware of the importance of Chinese literary, but only contemporary literature, not Chinese classics. For examples, *Classical Chinese Literature* (《含英咀华集》) by John Minford, *Reading in Chinese Literature Thought* (《中国文论：英译与评论》) by Stephen Owen, they are translated by foreign scholars, but the translation system is not mature. Culture exchange must be equal and balanced, while renovation is urgent needed in the system of translation. In the 21th century, globalization is a hot topic, but globalization is not equals to Westernization, Americanization or Christianization.

4. THE TRANSLATION STRATEGIES OF CHINESE CLASSICS

4.1. Domestication and Foreignization

Nida said: "For truly successful translating, familiar with two cultures is more important than master two languages, because only under the cultural background that languages makes sense" Chinese classics translations deliver the wisdom of the ancient Chinese civilization for the target language readers to the world. The Chinese classics translation should retain their own cultures, and root in the target language, grow and develop.

In terms of the Chinese classics translation, two methods are usually adopted: domestication or foreignization. Domestication and foreignization are terms come up in 1995 by the American scholar Venuti. The first term aims at target language, while the latter aims at original language. Domestication argues that translation should try to adapt to the target language's culture habit, for the sake of target language readers, help readers solve language cultural barriers. Foreignization claims that translation should present and reflect the original language's culture and the habit of the author's phrasing. Here is an example in Arthur Waley's translation:

子曰：“管仲之器小哉！”或问：“管仲俭乎？”曰：“管氏有三归，官事不摄，焉得俭？”The Confucius said: Kuan chung in reality is a very narrow man of ability. It is said that he must show an example of thrift? Confucius said, Kuan has three wives, his state officials had no dual role. How can he have regarded as an example of thrift? The phrase “管氏有三归”has different meaning, can be summarized as below: 1. The monarch has three wives and so does Kuan Chuang; 2.Kuan Kuang has three families; 3.Kuan Chung has three houses; 4.Kuan Chuang has a warehouse for reserving his property. Arthur Waley's chose the understanding for obey the strategy of foreignization.

4.2. Combination of Transliteration and Liberal Translation

In terms of traditional classics translation, we can adopt the following two methods for translations: transliteration and liberal translation. The characteristics of Chinese traditional culture are abstract, lofty and wisdom. The language reflects the mysterious deep Chinese nation ancient cultural forms, shows the distinctive national character. Many conceptions have different meaning, even modern Chinese needs assistant to explain it to a certain extent. Under traditional Chinese culture and English culture, any misunderstanding about the language is caused by culture differences. For translations which are unique to Chinese traditional culture, such as philosophy, traditional Chinese medicine theory, etc., only in the way of transliteration that English readers confusion or misunderstanding can be avoid, and it is also a way to protect culture essence from the loss is the important means.

The core of Confucius thought is "Ren", in *The Analects* of Confucius "Ren" word appears more than 100 times, but seldom discussed by Confucius, also he does not easy to "benevolence" franchisee. In the issue of "*The Analects*" translation at domestic and abroad, "Ren" have many kinds of translation versions. However, due to the influential Analects translation are mostly done by western missionaries or Sinologist, all English translators with preconceived ideas from western philosophy and religion, it's inevitable that those translations with a strong color of western traditional vocabularies. One of the most obvious problems is using the western religious culture to interpret China's philosophical concepts, and translating the Chinese classics with penetrating western connotation at the core of the vocabularies. In order to faithfully express the thoughts of Confucius, "Ren" is better to use transliteration. Here is an example of Arthur Waley's translation of *The Analects*:

子曰：“智者乐水，仁者乐山。智者静，仁者动。” The Master said, "The wise man delights in water, the Good man delights in mountains. For the wise move; but the Good stay still. The wise are happy, but the Good are secure." Arthur Waley added his own understanding to the translation, "the wise are happy, but the Good are secure." This is an example of liberal translation. When translation only describes the wise, the Good, the water and the mountain, readers may get confused. Arthur Waley explain by his own words, delivers what the writer wants to express.

Here is another example in *The Analects*, the original text is “己所不欲，勿施于人”，and here are three translation versions: 1. Do as you would be done by others; 2. Do not do to others what you would not want them to do to you; 3. Do not do to others what you would not like to do. It is obvious that the third one the best translation version among the three versions. The first two translations are literal translations, which cannot fully deliver the original meaning, while the third one takes the method of liberal translation.

5. CONCLUSION

China has become powerful gradually and Chinese cultures spread to all over the globe. For the external need, the task of Chinese classics translation gets urgent. There is an obvious difference between Chinese classics translation and foreign language translation. Chinese scholars should try their best to come up with a mature translation system of Chinese classics translation, and devote themselves in Chinese classics translation. Like Bassnett Susan said, translation studies are still a discipline and still has a long way to go.

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