

The Thinking Model of English Translations of Chinese Classic Poetry

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Abstract: The thinking model of English translations of Chinese classic poetry is an unsettled issue both in theory and in practice. Based on different English translation versions of *Ru Meng Ling* by Li Qingzhao this research explores the thinking model and its transcendence and transform in Chinese classic poetry translation, concludes three thinking model: conceptual thinking model, imagistic thinking model and imaginary thinking model.

Keywords: Poetry Translation; Conceptual Thinking Model; Imagistic Thinking Model; Imaginary Thinking Model

Chinese classic poetry is composed three important parts: meaning, image and ideorealm. People can understand the ideorealm by understanding meanings and images when they read a poem. Translating the meanings and images of a poem is easier while ideorealm is more difficult. To deal with the problem, some translators have raised a concept: thinking model of English translation. They tend to solve the problem from philosophical perspective. That means, translators can transfer the focus from how to translate ideorealm to how to rebuild the thinking model of poetry.

1. Review of research

Some scholars have devoted themselves into the field. In domestic, Professor Liu Miqing has raised "Translation thinking model includes abstract thinking model and concrete thinking model. By analyze the subject, translation should be regarded as an abstract thinking model. It doesn't belong to the concrete thinking model whose core is concrete images, and not belongs to the action thinking model whose core is actual actional (1999:82) [1]. According to Qian Xuesen, who has put forward abstract thinking model, concrete thinking model and creative thinking model, Zhang Guangming raised categories of thinking model: comprehensive thinking model, rational thinking model, holistic thinking model, analytical thinking model, intuitive thinking model, logic thinking model (2001:30). Gong Guangming has researched translation thinking model from nine perspective: concrete thinking model, inspiration thinking model, logic thinking model, semantic thinking model, pragmatic thinking model, indistinct thinking model, text thinking model literature style thinking model and creative thinking model (2005:1-7) [2]. Liu Huawen has analyzed concept thinking model and experiential thinking model, he holed this opinion: "western language is the result of concept thinking model while Chinese is the result of experiential thinking model" (2005:90) .

These researches above-mentioned have own disadvantages. Some are broad and ambiguous, referents are blurred, such as semantic thinking model, pragmatic thinking model and textual thinking model. Some extensions of thinking model are intermingled, they can be distinguished difficultly, such as logic thinking model and rational thinking model; intuition thinking model and comprehensive thinking model. Some emphasize one thinking model but reject others, such as "translation should be regarded as an abstract thinking model. It doesn't belong to the concrete".

2. Divisions of Chinese classical poetry thinking models.

According to the elements of thinking model, the thinking model of English translations of Chinese classic poetry can be divided three categories: thinking model of concept, thinking model of image and thinking model of preimage. The actuality of English translation of Chinese classic poetry has been considered.

2.1 Conceptual thinking model;

Concept is a fundamental element of thinking. Because there are images in Chinese classic poems, the conceptual thinking model is a base to the thinking model of English translations of Chinese classic poetry^[4]. This thinking model focuses on object. For example, the sceneries depicted in poems. thinking model shows some special form in English translation of Chinese classic poetry. In the word level, the main part of English translation of Chinese classic poetry is not equivalent conversion of concepts, while is the conversion of concepts and images, the ideal case is the equivalent conversion between images; in syntactic level, translators often transform the complex combinations of images into a long sentence which is divided two lines; from stylistic

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level, poems are usually translated into prose.

In those processes, translators need the conceptual thinking model, they are limited by it at the same time, because it attributes the literariness. It breaks the intuitional experience form of Chinese poetry. Translators should transcend conceptual thinking model. This research aims at finding the ways of transcending conceptual thinking model and other thinking model suited to E-C Poetry Translation.

2.2. Imagistic thinking model

Imagistic thinking is a measure to show abstract objectives by concrete signs. Image is also a fundamental element of thinking. This thinking model shows the union of subject and object rather than dichotomy. According to the common sense of aesthetic academia image is a kind of psychic figure combined objectives and feelings. So, readers' feel is a reflection of perceiving object. According to Arnheim, images in poems are "special pictures showed to readers with emotions." Based on this opinion, translators can map the feelings exist in original poems to translation version, it can make readers get the feeling just like what translators get from original poem when.

2.3. Imaginary thinking model

This concept is raised by professor Wang Shuren, transcending the limitation of material form concrete to abstract^[5]. It includes ample meaning beyond the verses. Imaginary thinking model is a non-objectified and non-savvy thinking model. The reason why the concept is put forward is that ideorealm exists in original poems but is lost during the process of translation, while the meanings beyond the verses are maintained.

It can be analyzed by Imaginary thinking model.

Above all, conceptual thinking model is a necessary condition of translation because of its abstractness, logicity. But it is not the ultimate goal of poetry translation; Imagistic thinking model is a normal thinking model in C-E poetry translation,

3. Three kinds of thinking model in C-E poetry translation

The transformation of thinking is a complicated process. It is intangible but makes great difference on translators' choice. Translators can get totally different translation version from one original text.

3.1. Conceptual thinking model in translation versions

Because English is a kind of hypotactic language, so there must be some evidence of transforming thinking model left in translation version. Professor Liu Huawen(2005:96) think: translators often focus on conceptual thinking built in logic between concepts while neglect the inner beauty of subject. Grammaticalization and logicalization in English make an inveterate effect on C-E poetry translation and rummage the special beauty of original poetry. Three versions of Ru Meng Ling by Li Qingzhao have been chose to demonstrate the opinion.

The first version translated by Wang Shouyi

It hardly rained
But the wind blew like crazy
last night
I feel the wind this morning
although my sleep was dreamless
now the maid comes in
and I question her
as she rolls the window shade
She says the crabapples are the same as yesterday
I say well is that a fact you ought to know
They should look much greener now and a lot less red^[6]

The original text uses "疏" "骤" "肥" "瘦" these word, seems to describe the scene, but actually describe the feeling in her heart. In the translation version, "crazy" "hardly" "red" "greener" only depict the scene, and divide the feeling from scene. In the original text, a limited scene, is composited by every image, delivers a depressed, lonely emotion to reader. In the aspect of expression, there are weak links between the images in the translation version the words "red" "greener" break the feeling of original text. In other hand, the style of original, the tight rhythm, has been changed obviously. For example, this sentence "I say well is that a fact you ought to know" is redundant compared with original sentence "知否，知否". The version only translated the images themselves but cannot deliver the connotative meanings and break the special aesthetic experience.

3.2. Imagistic thinking model in translation versions

the next version is translated by Lau.D.C

Last night the rain was fitful and the wind abrupt.

A good sleep has not cleared my drunken head.
Asking her who is rolling up the blind,
I am told the begonias are undisturbed.
Don't you see?

Don't you see?

The green must have grown fat and the red gone thin.

This version has the features of imagistic thinking model, readers can experience the scene depicted by original poem without extra explanations. Just like original text, this version keep the advantage: there is a picture in the poem, and a poem in the picture,

to let the readers in target language get the feelings which are same to Chinese readers. For thinking model perspective, by applying the thinking model of visualization, this version shows the contains appear in brain and then try to catch the meanings implied by the words. And this translation strategy can keep some space and uncertain points, to create a profound ideorealm by combine abstract parts and concrete parts.

3.3. Imaginary thinking model in translation versions

This version is translated by Xu Yuanchong

Last night the wind blew hard and rain was fine.

Sound sleep did not dispel the aftertaste of wine.

I ask the maid rolling up the screen.

"The same crab apple tree," she says, "was seen."

"But don't you know,

O don't you know?

The red should languish and the green must grow^[8]."

Readers can get the dejected and depressed emotion of the ideorealm in original poem by imaginary thinking model. So the profundity of ideorealm depends on the translation strategy of "肥" "瘦". The words "languish" and "grow" identify the main idea. "Languish" means "to be forced to stay somewhere or endure something unpleasant for a long time" or "to become weaker or fail to make progress". That is the depiction of author. And the word "grow" leave the imaginative space to readers, because the growth needs time, the result is "grow lushly" or "grow to wither", it all depends on the understanding of readers.

4. Conclusion

Conceptual thinking model, imagistic thinking model and imaginary thinking model is three kinds of thinking model in Chinese to English translation about Chinese classic poetry, the relationship of three are not either this or that, is that the conceptual thinking model is basis and go forward one by one. Conceptual thinking model is basis of C-E translation of Chinese classic poetry, but is not ultimate goal. The ultimate goal is rebuilt ideorealm in target language by imagistic thinking model and imaginary thinking model.

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