

On the Principles of Artistic Language in English Literary Translation

Tingting Liu

Yunnan Land and Resources Vocational College, Kunming, Yunnan, 652501, China

ABSTRACT

With the deepening of global cultural communication, the artistic value of English literary translation in intercultural communication has become increasingly prominent. As the core aesthetic carrier of literary texts, the translation quality of artistic language directly affects the transmission efficiency of cultural spirit and the integrity of aesthetic experience. The current translation practice faces the dual challenges of overcoming the structural differences in the language system and maintaining the aesthetic characteristics of literary works in cultural transcoding. There is still a theoretical gap between technical norms and aesthetic standards in the existing research, especially in the new context of digital technology involved in the translation process, and the principles of artistic language processing need to be systematically reconstructed. Therefore, this paper discusses the multi-dimensional processing mechanism of artistic language in English literary translation to establish a theoretical framework that considers cultural fidelity and aesthetic recreation. It is expected to provide more operational methodological support for literary translation.

KEYWORDS

English literary translation; Artistic language; Translation principles; Cultural transmission

1 The characteristics and functions of artistic language in English literary translation

1.1 Definition and formation of artistic language

In literary translation, artistic language refers to the special language form that carries aesthetic value and emotional experience. Its essence is constructing aesthetic effects through the creative use of language symbols. Unlike the information transmission function of ordinary language, the core of artistic language is to stimulate readers' imagination and emotional resonance, which has three characteristics: imagery, polysemy, and emotional projection. In the dimension of composition, artistic language contains three basic elements: the first is the rhetoric system, which covers techniques such as metaphor, symbol, and synaesthesia and breaks through literal meaning through unconventional language combinations; the second is rhythm, the musical aesthetic sense is formed by the alternation of level and oblique tones and the change of sentence length. Finally, the cultural code, the classical allusion, and the idiom in the specific cultural environment constitute the deep meaning network.

1.2 Forms of artistic language in English literature

The artistic language in English literature achieves aesthetic expression through diverse forms. In poetry creation, alliteration and internal rhyme are combined with interline continuity to form a unique rhythm, such as the auditory sensation created by vowel repetition in John Keats's works. The text breaks the linear narrative through the stream-of-consciousness style, and the long sentences in Woolf's works construct the flow of psychological time. The use of dialect slang in dramatic dialogues not only shapes the characters but also carries the cultural identity of specific groups, such as the marine cultural characteristics of the sailor dialect in Eugene O'Neill's plays. The construction of a metaphor system is particularly prominent. In William Faulkner's novels, time is regarded as a group of "Dust" imagery, which enhances the expression of the text by materializing abstract concepts. In terms of cultural expression, the intensive use of classical Greek myths and allusion in William Shakespeare's plays forms a dialogue dimension between history and reality in the Renaissance language environment. These forms constitute the artistic language system of English literature, and their translation conversion directly affects the transmission of the literary value of the works.

1.3 Functional features of artistic language in translation

In the process of interlingual conversion, artistic language undertakes three functional coupling systems: the textual reflexive function in the literary dimension transforms linguistic form into an aesthetic object, and translation needs to preserve this ontological status; The symbolic memory function of the cultural dimension carries the ethnic identity code, which requires the translator to maintain the continuity of cultural genes in the reconstruction of meaning; the aesthetic contract function of the acceptance dimension establishes the implicit negotiation framework between the author and the reader, the over-adaptation of translation to the target language habit breaks down the challenging presupposition of avant-garde literature. These three elements constitute a dynamic balance in the source language system. The functional

break in the translation process often leads to three consequences: the reduction of formal aesthetic dimension makes the text a popular reading material, and the loss of cultural codes disrupts historical connections. Moreover, the change of aesthetic contract leads to the dislocation of reception.

2 Principles of artistic language processing in English literary translation

2.1 Principles of fidelity and expressiveness

The core of artistic language translation lies in balancing the accuracy of the text with its artistic quality, ensuring fidelity to the original while achieving a vivid expression of artistic effect. The principle of faithfulness requires the translator to strictly follow the semantic framework of the source text, especially when dealing with culturally specific rhetoric methods such as metaphor and pun; the cultural environment and language logic must be deeply analyzed. For example, when translating the metaphor of plants in William Shakespeare's plays, it is necessary first to examine the symbolic meaning of specific plants in the Elizabethan era and then look for a counterpart with the same cultural associations in the target language. The principle of expressiveness emphasizes the transcendence of artistic representation of literal correspondence. When encountering the rhythm of poetry that can not be translated literally, the aesthetic loss can be compensated by adjusting the sentence structure and selecting words with similar phonological effects. The practice of this dual principle requires the translator to have the dual ability of literary appreciation and language creation. For example, when dealing with the stream-of-consciousness text, it is necessary to retain the non-linear language characteristics of the original text. It is also necessary to reconstruct the smooth flow of thought through the parataxis of Chinese. The key is to grasp the dialectical relationship between "Similar in shape and appearance" and "Alike in spirit" and, based on ensuring the accurate transmission of cultural information, reproduce the artistic appeal of the original through literary expression in the target language.

2.2 Principles of ideorealm representation

The cross-cultural reconstruction of Literary ideorealm is the core challenge of artistic language translation, and its essence lies in the equivalent transmission of aesthetic experience through language media. The synthesis of emotional atmosphere and philosophical implication of literary works, ideorealm, requires the translator to capture the symbolic network and emotional mapping of imagery community in text decoding. At the practical level, it is necessary to repair the loss of ideorealm caused by language differences through semantic compensation and cultural adjustment. For example, in the translation of the "Moon" imagery in classical Chinese poems, in addition to literal reference, it is necessary to convey the metaphor of homesickness and the philosophy of time and space. To treat the stream of consciousness in modernist literature, it is necessary to maintain the narrative rhythm and psychological authenticity through syntactic innovation while maintaining the fluidity of language.

2.3 Principles of Cultural Adaptation

Artistic language is highly dependent on its cultural soil, so the treatment of culture-specific items directly affects the reception of the translated version. The principle of cultural adaptation requires that the source language culture is neither rudely assimilated nor alienated from the language environment. However, an effective transmission channel of cultural information is established within the cognitive framework of the target readers. The strategies for dealing with three typical scenes are as follows: firstly, regarding the cultural background information, such as religious allusion and historical events, it is necessary to adopt the strategy of "Explicit compensation," that is, to fill the reader's cognitive gap through concise notes or contextual penetration. Secondly, we should prioritize substituting idioms with equivalent functions in the target language for folk language forms such as slang and proverbs. For example, translating the English proverb "It is raining cats and dogs" into Chinese "Pouring rain" is more in line with Chinese acceptance habits than literal translation. Thirdly, a "Functional transplant" of culturally exclusive aesthetic concepts, such as "Gentility" in Victorian literature, with its dual meanings of social class and ethics, it is necessary to choose different expressions such as "Elegant demeanor" or "Decent manner" according to specific situations. The essence of cultural adaptation is to build a bridge of cross-cultural understanding so that the cultural load of artistic language can not be deconstructed into abstract symbols.

2.4 Principles of style and mood maintenance

The style of literary works is a unique aesthetic mark constructed by the writer through language form, covering elements such as lexical choice tendency, sentence structure characteristics, rhetoric density, and narrative rhythm. Style

reproduction requires the translator to reconstruct the stylistic identity of the source text in the target language system. Taking Hemingway's "Telegraph" novels as an example, its short sentence structure and the high-frequency conjunction "and" form a concise and stern style. Chinese translation should avoid the habitual flow sentence pattern of the Chinese language. Instead, it should adopt a structure of short subject-verb sentences connected by commas to maintain the narrative rhythm of the original work. The mood level focuses on the emotional attitude implied in the text and the author's voice. For example, the delivery of irony in Jane Austen's novels depends on the precise control of the function word at the end of the sentence.

3 Artistic language processing strategies in English literary translation

3.1 Strategic choices between Literal Translation and Free translation

In literary translation, the choice between literal and free translation needs to be flexibly adjusted according to the characteristics of the text and the target readers. The literal translation focuses on retaining the linguistic form and structure of the original text, which is suitable for the content with a unique cultural image or rhetorical method. For example, when translating the "Bright Moon" in ancient Chinese poetry, literal translation can maintain the integrity of the original imagery and avoid the loss of cultural information. However, free translation is more appropriate when there is a big difference between the original expression and the target language. For example, the literal translation of the English proverb "It is raining cats and dogs" may confuse Chinese readers, but its translation into "Pouring rain" is more idiomatic. In practice, the translator needs to analyze the literary value of the text: the poem's rhythm, the narrative rhythm of the novel, or the dialogue style of the play may affect the choice of strategy. Modernist works often require literal translation to preserve linguistic experimentation, while children's literature for children requires free translation to ensure readability.

3.2 Rhetoric strategies in artistic language

As the procedural expression paradigm of artistic language, the cross-linguistic transfer of the rhetoric system is faced with a double dilemma: the dislocation of association caused by cultural cognitive differences in conventional rhetoric and variation rhetoric is rejected by the target language system. It is necessary to establish a functional taxonomy framework of rhetoric to reconstruct the semiotic relational network of the target language for metaphor, metonymy, and other rhetoric memes based on the principle of similarity to ensure that the mapping logic between the source domain and the target domain is not disturbed. The context-dependent rhetoric, such as irony and hyperbole, requires the reconstruction of the tone suggestion system in the target language and the transfer of latent attitudes through the regulation of functional words and the deformation of sentence patterns. The complexity of rhetoric strategies lies in the unpredictable phenomenon of sign appreciation: some rhetoric devices produce secondary metaphor structures in the source language beyond the designer's intention. In the translation process, a double monitoring mechanism should be activated: at the micro level, the accuracy of the transformation of individual rhetoric should be ensured; at the macro level, the interaction force of the whole rhetoric system should be maintained.

3.3 Cross-cultural translation strategies

The cultural dimension of artistic language requires translation to establish a two-way regulatory mechanism of semiotics. On the encoding side, it is necessary to deconstruct the hierarchical structure of source language cultural symbols to distinguish between material symbols, ritual symbols, and conceptual symbols in culture-specific items. The former two can be transformed through the functional equivalents in the target language cultural library, while the latter needs to construct a compensation channel for cross-cultural interpretation. On the decoding side, we should prejudge the target readers' triple perceptual filter of heterogeneous symbols: cultural cognitive distance, aesthetic preparation expectation, and historical association potential. The strategy relies on three core technologies: the first is semantic field reconstruction technology, which embeds isolated heterogeneous symbols into the semantic interconnection network of the target language to obtain understandable meaning coordinates; The second is the technology of developing cultural language environment, which activates readers' cultural relevance ability through intertextual suggestion within the text. The third is the cognitive redundancy control technology, which releases high-density cultural information in a gradient way to avoid receiving overload.

4 Conclusion

Treating artistic language in English literary translation is a cross-lingual reconstruction of the semiotic aesthetic system. The core contradiction lies in the dual characteristics of artistic language: as a self-disciplined semiotic structure, it requires the preservation of form; as a cultural cognitive medium, it also needs to achieve functional equivalence. This study reveals that the choice of translation strategies does not depend on the presupposed methodological position but based on the functional orientation of the specific artistic language unit in the text system—the dialectical implementation of literal translation and free translation must be based on the aesthetic necessity of the unit in the source language, the transformation of rhetoric devices needs to maintain the dual mapping relationship between the surface technical layer and the deep cultural layer, and cross-cultural transplantation needs to break through the limitation of surface symbol correspondence, to build a dynamic balance between the kinetic energy of heterogeneous symbols and the solvability of the target language environment. The highest criterion of artistic language translation is the conservation of symbolic potential energy, whether adopting the strategy of formal transplantation, functional reconstruction, or cultural negative space, and the ultimate goal is to make the target language text reproduce the creative potential energy and revelatory tension of the source artistic symbol.

About the Author

Tingting Liu, master, Associate Professor, research interests: English teaching, English language and literature.

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