

A Comparative Study on Two Chinese Versions of *Gone with the Wind* from the Perspective of Feminist Translation Theory

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Abstract. Feminist translation is one of the key topics in current research and has developed by leaps and bounds since the 1980s. In order to correct the potential defects in feminist translation, some scholars put forward the translation perspective of androgyny. It was found that the translation studies of *Gone with the Wind* were mostly based on feminist translation strategies, but the research on translator's ability of androgyny has still been insufficient. This paper used *Gone with the Wind* and its two Chinese translations as objects of the study. It compared different feminist translation strategies the two translators chose in their translations and evaluated whether these two translators have the ability of androgyny. After analyzing these cases, it was found that two translators all used feminist translation strategies to translate. They often used the strategy of "supplement", and sometimes also used the strategy of "hijacking", in order to strengthen the existence of female roles in the text. However, when translating characters whose genders were opposite to their own, the two translators failed to think from the perspective of these characters but translated literally or from the perspective of their own genders, which indicated that the perspective of androgyny was still difficult to achieve. Therefore, translators should be aware of the characteristics of two different genders and try to improve their ability of androgyny.

Keywords: Case study; comparative analysis method; feminist translation; androgyny.

1. Introduction

The development of feminism had gone through three revolutions. At first, feminists strove for the absolute equality between men and women. After that, they turned to advocate the uniqueness of female. In the end, they emphasized on the universal diversity among individuals. Influenced by feminism, feminist translation thoughts began to rise in 1990s. Feminist translation has contributed a lot to eliminating sex prejudice, improving the status of women and promoting the feminist movement. At the same time, when feminist translators struggling for the speaking right of women, it was hard for them to avoid being radical because of too much emphasis on the subjectivity of women. In order to improve that situation, some scholars came up with the idea of androgyny. The perspective of androgyny required translators to no longer be confined to their own genders and break the boundary of dichotomy, so that they can reconstruct a more appropriate relationship between male and female, the original text and translation.

In recent years, there has been a great deal of discussion on feminist translation research, and many scholars have also analyzed different translation versions of Chinese and foreign literary works from the perspective of feminist translation. Chen Yu and Chen Lin compared two Chinese translation versions of *Jane Eyre*, and pointed out that translators need to break through the blockade of male discourse power, rewrite the original text properly, and make the translation meet the requirements of feminist translation [1]. Yan Xinyu and Liu Zhifang analyzed three Chinese translation versions of *Gone with the Wind* and indicated that the translator's subjectivity is important to our translation study [2]. Tao Shumin compared two Chinese translation versions of *Vanity Fair*. She pointed out that "androgyny" is not the ultimate goal of literary translation, but a rational appeal to translators which can ensure that literary translation is faithful to the original work in the gender dimension [3]. Therefore, it was found that most studies on the translation and gender of *Gone with the Wind* were

based on feminist translation strategies. There was still a gap in the research on translator's ability of androgyny, so this study attempts to fill the gap.

This paper took two Chinese translation versions of *Gone with the Wind* by Li Meihua, the female translator, and Fu Donghua, the male translator, as the research objects. It compared two Chinese versions of *Gone with the Wind* from the perspective of feminist translation theory and analyzed the different translation strategies used by these two translators when translating the texts about characters in the novel. This paper also studied the reflection of feminism in the process of translation by two translators and analyzed their abilities of androgyny. This paper used case study and comparative analysis method to conduct the research. The first part was the introduction of feminist translation theory which acted as a theoretical foundation. The second part was case study. This part selected several representative sentences from the original text and translation versions and analyzed them from the perspective of feminist translation. It is hoped that this study can fill the gap of researches on feminist translation strategies and the perspective of androgyny in *Gone with the Wind* to some extent and give a potential direction for the development of feminist translation in the future.

2. Feminist Translation Theory

2.1 The Emergence of Feminist Translation Thoughts

The first revolution of feminism began from the late 19th century to the 1960s. Feminists were actively engaged in fighting for the rights of women and raising the awareness of political participation. One representative of this revolution was Beauvoir. In her work *The Second Sex*, she pointed out that men saw themselves as subjects and saw women as objectives, making women become "the Other" who were attached to them. But women should have their own subjectivity and achieve freedom and independence [4]. Her viewpoint expressed the pursuit of the equal rights between men and women. The second revolution of feminism came into being from the 1960s to the 1980s, when many scholars represented by Cixous put forward the important concept of female writing. She believed that in the history of writing which has been dominated by men since ancient times, female writing was a necessary means for women to win the right of speech, and also an important way for women to liberate themselves. Only through writing which was written by and face to female, and through accepting the challenges to the dominance of male worship, can women establish their position [5]. In the third revolution of feminism, the third generation of feminists advocated multiple differences. Representative scholar Kristeva indicated that except gender, there were many other differences between people like different ethnic groups, religions and classes. She also believed that the uniqueness of female identity should be respected and female characteristics that were marginalized by patriarchy should be negated [5]. Feminism which pursues gender equality and female independent consciousness is similar to the translation study which pursues equal status between original texts and translations. As a result, when feminism is connected with translation study, feminist translation theory comes into being [6]. With the continuous integration of female consciousness and translation studies, women and translators have found their own positions on the historical stage. As Godard put it, "Feminist translators declare that... they intend to rudely occupy the text they translate, and will not be a humble and invisible translator" [7].

2.2 Feminist Translation Strategies

As for the traditional translation view, the translation is subordinate to the original and the translator is subordinate to the author. Under the oppression of patriarchy, women lost their discourse rights, and their status was similar to that of translators, so translators were often called "unfaithful beauties" [8]. The translation is not only a specific language but also culture, ideology and many other issues. The feminist translation tries its best to "make women appear in the language, so that the world can see and hear women". Its main purpose is to break through the binary opposition thinking of traditional translation theories, eliminate discrimination against women in translation, and extend women's right to speak. Flotow summarizes the three most common feminist translation strategies as

follows: supplement, prefacing and footnoting, and hijacking [8]. Supplement means that the translator needs to provide background knowledge to the target language readers to help them understand the information. In feminist translation, the translator uses supplementary strategies to highlight the female image, change the absolute status of the standard of “faithfulness”, and make the translation show the equality between men and women on the basis of fluency. Prefacing and footnoting means that the translator translates it with explicit modification and strong intervention, so as to provide missing information to the target language readers through the translation. Hijacking means that the translator rewrites the parts in the original text that contradict the feminist views on the basis of retaining the writing style of the original text, so as to highlight the personality of female images, strengthen female discourse rights and eliminate gender discrimination.

2.3 Androgyny Perspectives in Feminist Translation

“Androgyny” is a combination of “andro”, the masculine prefix, and “gyny”, the feminine suffix. In biology, “Androgyny” refers to the presence of both male and female glands in certain plants or animals. In psychology, “Androgyny” refers to the presence of both distinctly female and male personality traits in a particular individual. In translation theory, “Androgyny” refers to a more ideal translation perspective of the translator in the translation process, which requires the translator not only to view the original text from his or her own gender perspective, but also to bring into play his or her subjective initiative, consciously consider the gender issues arising in the translation from the perspective of the opposite gender, speculate on the psychological activities of the characters of the opposite gender, and appreciate his or her words and behavior, to ensure that the translation is closer to the meaning of the original.

The concept of androgyny was developed to correct the inherent flaws in the feminist translation theory [9]. It is true that the feminist translation theory has made a significant contribution to the elimination of gender bias and the advancement of women and the promotion of the feminist movement, but while fighting for woman’s right to speak, it is inevitable that the emphasis on woman’s status and the subjectivity of the translator is too deliberate or even radical. Therefore, the androgyny translation perspective requires translators to cross gender boundaries, breaking the gender binary and reconstructing a new, healthier and more desirable binary relationship between male and female, translation and original, translator and reader [10].

3. Comparison of Translation Strategies of Li’s and Fu’s versions from a Feminist Translation Perspective

This paper uses Chinese translations of *Gone with the Wind* by one male and one female translator. It firstly collected some original texts and translations which can reflect the gender characteristics of male and female characters. And then it compared the different feminist translation strategies the two translators chose, in order to evaluate whether these two translators have the ability of androgyny when translating. We have chosen three typical characters from *Gone with the Wind*: Scarlett, Melanie and Rhett.

3.1 Female Characters

3.1.1 Scarlett

Example 1:

The original: In her face were too sharply blended the delicate features of her mother... and the heavy ones of her florid Irish father. [10] p.1

Li’s version: 她的脸上显然融合了...既标致娇柔, 又红润粗犷. [11] p.1

Fu’ version: 原来这位小姐脸上显然混杂着两种特质: 一种是母亲给她的娇柔, 一种是父亲给她的豪爽. [12] p.1

Example 2:

The original: Her eyes were pale green without a touch of hazel, starred with bristly black brows slated upward... [11] p.1

Li's version: 黑黑的睫毛圈在眼睛周围... [12] p.1

Fu's version: 她的眼珠子是一味的淡绿色, 不杂一丝儿的茶褐, 周围竖着一圈儿粗黑的睫毛... [13] p.1

Example 3:

The original: But it was an arresting face... [11] p.1

Li's version: 这张脸实在迷人, 非常引人注目... [12] p.1

Fu's version: ...所以遗传给她的质地难免不调和. 可是质地虽然不调和, 她那一脸蛋儿却实在迷人的很... [13] p.1

In example 1, Fu translates the two different qualities of Scarlett's appearance, "delicate" and "heavy", as "娇柔" and "粗犷", while Li translates them as "标志娇柔" and "红润粗犷". It is clear that Fu's wording is more direct. Li adds two adjectives, "标志" and "红润", which means "comely" and "rosy". It can be seen that Li's wording is more suitable for describing women and is more in line with the image in the original.

In example 2, when describing Scarlett's thick eyelashes as circling around her eyes, Fu translates it as "周围竖着一圈儿", while Li translates it as "圈在眼睛周围". The verbs "竖" and "圈" are translated as 'erect' and 'circle' in English, which can be seen in that Fu's translation is stiff, while Li's is more vivid.

From the above examples, we can see that Fu tends to translate the original text directly, while Li, as a female translator, has a more delicate perspective and uses more feminine words to describe women, creating a more beautiful and vivid image of the heroine.

In example 3, The original text has a turn of phrase, "But it was an arresting face", after describing the two different qualities of Scarlett's appearance, "delicate" and "heavy". To highlight this turn of phrase, Fu adds to the translation "所以遗传给她的质地难免不调和", which is not found in the original. Fu uses the feminist translation strategy of 'supplement' to emphasize Scarlett's seemingly incongruous appearance and to suggest the contradictory parts of her character, which further emphasizes the female characteristic. Li directly omits this turn of phrase and translates it as "这张脸实在迷人, 非常引人注目". We believe that this is because Li sees this turn of phrase as a gender-biased idea. This is because the original text dichotomies male and female gender characteristics, implying that women are not arresting if they have appearance with masculine features. Therefore, Li uses the feminist translation device of "hijacking" to remove the turn that contradicts feminist theory, eliminating the problem of gender bias.

From the above analysis, it can be seen that when translating the image of the heroine Scarlett, Li, as a woman, takes a female perspective and uses more female-appropriate wording and phrasing to create a better image of women. Li also uses the feminist translation strategy of "hijacking" to eliminate the gender bias in the original text. Fu prefers to translate the original text directly and uses the feminist translation strategy of "supplement" to highlight the female protagonist, but still from his own gender perspective, which shows that he does not have a high degree of androgyny awareness in the translation process.

3.1.2 Melanie

Example1:

The original: She was sick now... and stay in bed. [11] p.393

Li's version: 她现在已经恶心想吐了...卧床休息. [12] p.287

Fu's version: 其实她现在是病了...不肯待在床上. [13] p.282

Example2:

Original Text: At first ...like an animal dying in a trap. [11] p.510

Li's version: 起先...她仿佛是只在陷阱里垂死挣扎的野兽, 嗷嗷乱叫. [12] p.371

Fu's version: 起先...她的声音一直像一头在陷阱里临死的野兽. [13] p.364

As for the first example, in the original, the author used the word “sick” to describe Melanie’s discomfort after she became pregnant. In Li’s version, the translator is a woman who is familiar with the experience of sickness during pregnancy. So she uses supplementary translation strategies, translating “sick” into “恶心想吐” and “stay in bed” into “卧床休息”. Li’s version is more vivid, in line with the author’s intention, and it is much easier for the target language readers to understand. Fu, as a male translator, does not understand how women feel when they are pregnant, so he uses the literal translation. He translates “sick” into “病了” and “pregnancy” into “怀孕的症候”. Although the translation is slightly stiff, it also emphasizes the pregnancy to readers.

As for the second example, firstly, in the original, Melanie needs to grab something to gain more strength and ease her great pain. In Li’s version, she uses supplementary translation strategy, translating “clamped down on it” into “掐进去”. While in Fu’s version, he uses literal translation strategy, translating it into “往下拨”. By contrast, as a woman, Li is more familiar with the experience of delivery, because women tend to “掐” instead of “拨” when they are giving a birth to a baby. Secondly, Melanie is painful in the delivery of her baby, so she “straining, pulling, tearing”. In Li’s version, she uses supplementary translation strategy, translating them into “拼命拉着, 用力扯着”. But in Fu’s version, he uses omission translation strategy and ignore the vivid description. He is not faithful to the original. Finally, in the last sentence, Fu’s version uses supplementary translation strategy, he adds “闹” to describe her actions and pain, which is his personal feeling and shows that he does not truly understand the pain of childbirth. By contrast, Li is more faithful to the original.

Based on the analysis, it shows that when translating content related to female, especially the special experience of the women, such as pregnancy and delivery the female translator can better express the original meaning. It is quite a challenge for translators to represent Melanie’s three-dimensional character, there is both female softness and male firmness. On the one hand, she is tolerant, kind, gentle and virtuous. On the other hand, in the turbulent times, she chose to be optimistic and strong, and faces the difficulties bravely. Therefore, both male and female translators should further improve the androgynous ability, understand the feelings and experiences of the character, so as to make the translation smoother and more natural.

3.2 Male Character

Example1:

The original: ...he smiled, showing animal—white teeth ... and his eyes were as bold as any pirate’s appraising a maiden to be ravished. [11] p.91

Li’s version: ...他对他笑了笑...露出像动物一样洁白的牙齿...双眼又大胆又乌黑, 就像个海盗在判定是否要糟蹋少女的举动时的眼睛一样. [12] p.111

Fu’s version: ...他微笑了一下...露出一副野兽一般白的牙齿来...他的眼睛英勇而黑色, 跟海盗主张抢劫处女时的眼睛一般. [13] p.92

This was the description of Rhett’s appearance when he first met Scarlett. The original text “he smiled” in Lady Li’s version was “他对他笑了笑”. She used the “supplement” technique of feminist translation strategies, adding “对他笑” which wasn’t contained in the original text in her translation, and showing that it was Scarlett that was given a smile by Rhett. That kind of feminist translation strategy emphasized the female subject, Scarlett, and highlighted the existence of women in the language. Lady Li’s translation also reflected Rhett’s keen interest in Scarlett and Scarlett’s strong attraction to him. However, Mr. Fu just literally translated it as “他微笑了一下” without using any feminist translation strategies.

The original text “a maiden to be ravished” in Mr. Fu’s version was “抢劫处女”. The meaning of the word “ravish” was “to force a woman to have sex”. Mr. Fu used the “hijacking” technique of feminist translation strategies, rewriting the original meaning of “ravish” which contained insult to women and replacing it with a more neutral term “抢劫”, which can be used by both male and female, in order to weaken the discrimination against women. By contrast, Lady Li translated it as “糟蹋”,

keeping the implication of “ravish” which contained humiliation of women. Although it was closer to the original text, it did not reflect the feminist translation thought.

As for the translation of the word “animal”, Mr. Fu’s version was “野兽”, which showed the bohemian personality of Rhett and reflected the possessiveness of a man when he saw a woman as a predator saw its prey. But as a female translator, Lady Li just literally translated it as “动物”. She failed to stand in the perspective of this male character and showed the wild side of his personality. As a result, Lady Li’s analytical ability of androgyny still had many rooms to improve. In the process of translation, translators should try to stand in the gender perspective, which was opposite to their own, so that they could conduct the translation more successfully.

4. Conclusion

Based on feminist translation theory, this paper analyzed several cases related to the description of different characters and compared feminist translation strategies and the translator’s ability of androgyny between Li Meihua’s and Fu Donghua’s versions of *Gone with the Wind*. It was found that in the process of translation, these two translators often used the feminist translation strategy of “supplement”, and sometimes also used the strategy of “hijacking” to translate. That reflected the feminist translation viewpoint, strengthened the existence of women in the language and highlighted the female subject. However, these two translators failed to think from the perspective of the characters whose genders were opposite to their own in the process of translation. Instead, they mostly translated the text literally or from the perspective of their own genders. That way of translation was caused by a variety of factors. On one hand, the gender, living periods and idiomatic expression did a great influence on the translators and it was difficult for them to break out of their original translation style. On the other hand, influenced by the translation principle of faithfulness, the translation was difficult to reflect the translator’s gender perspective for it was too faithful to the original text. Therefore, the perspective of androgyny is still an ideal state and is not easy to be used effectively in practice. Translators need to be sensitive enough with their translations and realize the characteristics of different genders, trying to put themselves in the position of characters in the text. In that way, they can raise the ability of androgyny and get closer to the original text. This study has made some efforts into researches which are related to feminist translation strategies and the perspective of androgyny in Chinese versions of *Gone with the Wind*. It also wants to provide some enlightenment for the development of feminist translation in China. At the same time, this study is probably subjective for it only chose several representative sentences to analyze. Therefore, this study should add and compare more texts in order to deepen the relevant research in the future.

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