

Analysis of the Chinese Translation of The Art of Loving (Excerpt) from the Perspective of Newmark's Translation Theory

Yina Luo¹, *

¹ School of Foreign Languages, Southwest Jiaotong University, Chengdu, CO 610031, China

* Corresponding author: Luo Yina (Email: 849540379@qq.com)

Abstract: Peter Newmark was a famous British translator and translation theorist. According to the type of text, he divided texts into expressive text, informative text, and vocative text in his first book *Approaches to Translation*, published in 1981 and formed the core concept of his translation thought, "semantic translation" and "communicative translation". Based on semantic translation, communicative translation, and text typology, this paper tries to analyze the Chinese translation of the source text, *The Art Of Loving*(excerpts), written by Eric Fromm, a famous German-American psychologist, psychoanalyst and philosopher. Due to the psychology and critical thinking of the source text, the translator prefers to communicative translation and uses various translation methods and skills to reduce reading difficulties. This paper finds that any translation is a mixture of many theories, strategies, or methods. To some extent, in the process of translation, it inspires us to pay more attention to the use of translation theory, so that intuition and rationality can be combined, and closer to the essence of translation than the subconscious translation behaviors.

Keywords: *The Art Of Loving*, Semantic translation, Communicative translation, Translation skills.

1. Introduction

Translation, as an important means of communication, in all aspects of cross-culture communication, is playing a crucial role. Translation theory's main concerns are to determine appropriate translation methods for the widest possible range of texts or text-categories. Peter Newmark, a famous British translation theorist, linked language function to translation in his theory and further brought the theory of text typology to translation practices. Communicative translation, semantic translation, and text typology are important parts of Newmark's translation theories. This paper delves into the application of Newmark's theories, specifically analyzing the Chinese translation of excerpts from Eric Fromm's work-- *The Art of Loving*. The analysis reveals the complex amalgamation of theories, strategies, and methods inherent in every translation, urging a heightened focus on the application of translation theory. Also, this paper advocates for a harmonious blend of intuition and rationality, transcending subconscious translation behaviors and approaching the essence of translation with precision.

2. Newmark's Translation Theory

Newmark held the view that translation is a craft consisting in the attempt to replace a written message or statement in one language with the same message or statement in another language. The emergence of Newmark's translation theory arouses great attention in translation academic fields both in the West and in China. He combined translation studies with language studies, and used linguistic theories to guide the translation practice. He pointed out that translation is not only a science but also an art as well as a skill, and the aim of his translation studies is to solve the real problems in the process of translation. Therefore, his translation theory is guided and is to the point. His two books, *Approaches to Translation* and

A Textbook of Translation have significant effects on translation scholars and teachers.

2.1. Communicative and Semantic Translation

Peter Newmark has given clear definitions of communicative and semantic translation in his book, *Approaches to Translation*. Communicative translation attempts to produce on its readers an effect as close as possible to that obtained on the readers of the original. Semantic translation attempts to render, as closely as the semantic and syntactic structures of the second language allow, the exact contextual meaning of the original[1].

Semantic translation aims for the accuracy of the target text, primarily serving the culture of the original language and the original author. It is interpreted only when there is the greatest obstacle to understanding the meaning of the original text. However, communicative translation places more emphasis on the reader's response, which is more subjective and serves the culture of the translated language. To avoid any difficulties in understanding, the translator may even modify the original work[2].

These two translations cannot be strictly separated, especially when dealing with the same text. If it is possible to simultaneously employ semantic translation and communicative translation in conveying the message, it might be the most effective translation. However, if faithfulness to the original text is crucial, one should adhere to semantic translation. If readers cannot accept the information conveyed in the original text, and the original information is not highly significant, communicative translation can be chosen to use language that the target audience finds more acceptable.

2.2. Text Typology

Translation is the translation of the text, and the study of translation cannot be separated from the text. According to German linguist Buhler's tripartite theory of language

functions -- expressive function, informative function, and vocative function, Newmark divided texts into expressive text, informative text, and vocative text in *A Textbook of Translation*. In fact, two or even three types may overlap in the same text. When analyzing a text, the translator should first judge which is the main type according to its dominant function to determine the type of the text.

3. Introduction of The Art of Loving

The source text is derived from the psychological work *The Art of Loving* by the renowned German-American psychologist, psychoanalyst, and philosopher -- Eric Fromm. This work is a theoretical treatise on the art of love, employing psychoanalytic methods to study and expound on the subject. Through concise language, the work elucidates the profound topic of love.

Typical expressive texts include serious literary works, authoritative statements, various laws, and legal documents, as well as scientific, philosophical, and scholarly writings from reputable institutions, as well as autobiographies, essays, and personal letters[3]. As a psychological work, *The Art of Loving* tends to be the expressive text. Regarding this text, Newmark suggested that translators should focus on staying true to the original author. Following the principles of accuracy and objectivity, both the contextual meaning of the original text and the writing style of the original author should be preserved and reproduced to the greatest extent possible.

In this work, the author argues that love is not unrelated to one's maturity but an investment of emotional commitment as well as the effort to develop one's entire personality with a creative tendency. As Fromm said, every attempt at love will fail if individuals do not strive to cultivate their complete personalities and achieve a creative orientation. Fromm encourages readers to develop the capacity for love, cultivate their personalities, and master the art of love by acquiring the necessary knowledge and putting in the effort. Therefore, to some extent, *The Art of Loving* also aligns with the vocative text in Newmark's theory of text typology.

The Art of Loving is divided into four chapters and this paper analyzes the first chapter -- "Is Love an Art?" and its Chinese translation.

4. Application of Newmark's Translation Theory

The Art of Loving is mainly an expressive text, supplemented by a vocative text. Its translation shows a combination of Newmark's semantic and communicative translation as following.

4.1. Application of Semantic Translation

Newmark believed that semantic translation needs to retain the original cultural connotation of the work in the translation, and tries to translate the accurate contextual meaning of the original text as closely as possible in accordance with the semantic and syntactic structure of the second language.

4.1.1. Keep the Original Form

ST1: This peculiar attitude is based on several premises which either singly or combined tend to uphold it.

TT1: 他们之所以持有这种特殊态度是有其各种原因的, 这些原因反过来又分别地或总和地加强了他们的这一态度。

Semantic translation translates closer to the form of the

original text and retains the sentence pattern of the original text as much as possible without adjusting the word order. The translation has translated the modifier according to the original order, without putting it in front to modify "premises" like Chinese style, making the translation more natural and appropriate.

ST2: This attitude has several reasons rooted in the development of modern society.

TT2: 产生这一看法有多种原因, 这些原因的根源基于现代社会的发展。

Semantic translation generally uses words as the basic unit of translation and does not easily change the sentence form after translating the meaning of the words. If communicative translation were used, this sentence would be translated as "这一看法有几个根源于现代社会发展的原因". However, such a translation does not highlight the characteristics of the flexible original language and the multi-use of short sentences.

4.1.2. keep the Original Rhetoric

ST: They watch endless numbers of films about happy and unhappy love stories, and they listen to hundreds of trashy songs about love.

TT: 悲欢离合的爱情电影他们百看不厌, 百般无聊的爱情歌曲他们百听不厌。

The word "trashy" means "containing trash and worthless". The translation retains the rhetorical meaning of the original, using two Chinese idioms "悲欢离合" and "百无聊赖" to correspond to "happy", "unhappy", and "trashy" in the original, restoring the author's emotional attitude. The idioms "悲欢离合" and "百无聊赖" are familiar to the target readers, which can strengthen their understanding to a certain extent and show the emotional color of the source language.

4.1.3. Zero-translation

Zero-translation refers to words and phrases from one language being incorporated into another language without translation.

ST1: The third error leading to the assumption that there is nothing to be learned about love lies in the confusion between the initial experience of "falling" in love, and the permanent state of being in love, or as we might better say, of "standing" in love.

TT1: 产生在爱情这件事上一无可学这一看法的第三个错误是人们不了解“堕入情网”同“持久的爱”这两者的区别。如果我们用 falling in love 和 being in love 这两个英文搭配也许就能更清楚地区分这两个概念。

Semantic translation is concerned with reproducing the form of the original text to the greatest extent possible. The translator takes zero-translation to retain original words -- "falling in love" and "being in love", to make easier for Chinese readers to clear up the confusion between "堕入情网" and "持久相爱" and to deepen their understanding of the difference between the two words.

4.2. Application of Communicative Translation

While adopting semantic translation, the translator also uses communicative translation to realize the integration of Chinese and Western cultures. In the treatment of some words and sentences, the translator breaks the constraints of the logical form of the original text, makes appropriate adjustments according to the habits of the Chinese language, and uses some translation methods and skills to reveal the logical essence behind the original text.

4.2.1. Variation

Variation makes the content or main idea of the translated text different from the original. Sometimes, the translation methods and skills may be used to achieve a specific translation purpose that is different from that of the original author, or to meet the specific needs of the target language readers.

ST1: Is Love an Art?

TT1: 爱是一门艺术吗?

The word “art” in the title *Is Love an Art* can be traced back to the ancient Latin word “ars”, the earliest meaning of which is “an ability or skill a person can develop with training and practice”. That is the true meaning used in the original text instead of the definition of “art” that has been used since the end of the 17th century. The author explains its meaning in the first paragraph -- “it requires knowledge and effort”, but the translator still chooses to treat it as “艺术”, which is the later definition and is a term commonly understood by readers, instead of adopting the meaning intended by the original author.

4.2.2. Addition

The addition is to add the meaning which is not in the form but in the connotation of the original text[4]. Chinese and English are two completely different languages, each with its own historical and cultural background. If the translator translates the original text word by word, the target text will be unacceptable. Necessary words, phrases, clauses, or complete sentences could be added in translation to make the target text conform to the habits of Chinese in terms of grammar and linguistic form.

ST1: IS LOVE AN ART? Then it requires knowledge and effort.

TT1: 爱是一门艺术吗? 如果爱是一门艺术, 那就要求人们有这方面的知识并付出努力。

The translation adopts the translation skill of meaning addition, adding “if love is an art”, showing the implicit meaning of “then”, which is in line with the principle of repetition in Chinese, and also gives the sentence a sense of rhythm, making readers reading more fluently.

ST2: Or is love a pleasant sensation, which to experience is a matter of chance, something one “falls into” if one is lucky?

TT2: 或者爱仅仅是一种偶然产生的令人心荡神怡的感受, 只有幸运儿才能“堕入”爱的情网呢?

The grammatical addition of the object of “falls into”--“爱的情网” shows the scenario in which most people would undoubtedly believe the second hypothesis, closer to the readers of the translation.

ST3: Not that people think that love is not important. They are starved for it;

TT3: 但这大多数人决不认为爱情无关紧要, 相反他们追求爱情。

The sentence “not that people think that love is not important” means “I don’t mean that people think that love is not important”. The translator removes the subject position of “I don’t mean” and puts “most people” in the subject position when dealing with this sentence, which reflects the principle that communicative translation pays more attention to the reader’s response, to bring the distance with the readers closer and provokes their empathy or thinking. Moreover, in the original text, the two sentences are separated by a period, but in the translation, they are combined into one sentence with a

comma, and the addition of the logical correlative “相反(on the contrary)” makes the connection between the previous and the next closer and more interlocking.

4.2.3. Adaptation

Adaptation, also called cultural substitution or cultural equivalent, is a cultural element that substitutes the original text with one that is better suited to the culture of the target language. This results in a more familiar and comprehensive text.

ST1: In the Victorian age, as in many traditional cultures, love was mostly not a spontaneous personal experience which then might lead to marriage.

TT1: 十九世纪在许多传统的文化中爱情往往不是自发的、最后导致婚姻的个人经历。

“The Victorian age”, also known as the Victorian era, refers to the reign of Queen Victoria of England (1837-1901). The translator does not choose the literal translation method, but uses the period of the era “十九世纪(19th century)” to replace the proper term “Victorian era”. From the perspective of readers, the translator makes readers who are not familiar with British history clearly respond to the general historical background.

4.2.4. Transformation

“Transformation” refers to the process of transforming a linguistic unit or structure from the original language into a linguistic unit or structure in the target language that has similar, corresponding, or heterogeneous properties.

ST1: It was concluded on the basis of social considerations, and love was supposed to develop once the marriage had been concluded.

TT1: 婚姻要门当户对。至于爱情, 人们认为婚后自然而然就会产生。

The translator renders the first half of the sentence as “婚姻要门当户对(marrying within your own class)”, which represents a cultural transformation and falls within the category of target language adaptation. The fundamental reason for this cultural transformation lies in the fact that different ethnic groups adhere to distinct cultural norms. In translation, if one aims to achieve maximum acceptability of the translated text, efforts should be made to align with the cultural norms of the target language[5]. This inevitably leads to the need for cultural-level transformations. The translator effectively employs the distinctive Chinese term “门当户对(families of equal rank)” to culturally match “social considerations”, making it more accessible for the readers to understand.

4.2.5. Order Adjustment

There are some differences between English and Chinese in the ways of expression and customs, as well as in the word order. In the process of translation, it is required to deal with the corresponding details skillfully and adjust the order of words and sentences in English and Chinese promptly, which can ensure the more accurate expression of sentences and improve the fluency of sentences.

ST1: Two persons thus fall in love when they feel they have found the best object available on the market, considering the limitations of their own exchange values.

TT1: 这样当男女双方感觉到在考虑到他们本身的交换价值的情况下, 已经找到市场上所提供的最合适的对象, 他们就开始相爱。

The translator does not adhere to the original sentence structure but instead considers the target language’s

preference for a causal sequence, leading to a reordering of the sentence. The translator places the prerequisites and reasons for the love between the man and woman at the beginning, followed by the outcome of “开始相爱(fall in love)” at the end. This adjustment aligns with the target language’s tendency to present details first and then provides a summary, fitting the characteristic of presenting reasons before the results in the target language.

5. Conclusion

It can be seen through the above examples that the application of Newmark’s translation theory to the translation practice in the field of psychology has a strong guiding significance. Any translation is a mixture of multiple theories, strategies, and methods produced by the translator. Given the elevated philosophical and speculative nature of *The Art of Loving*, reading it can be a demanding task. In the process of translating, the translator tends to use communicative translation, considering the target culture which aims to ensure target readers can accept the translation both in terms of content and form, breaking away from the limitations of a

mere replication of the original language. So, it is crucial to pay closer attention to the use of translation theories, so that we can combine intuition and rationality, bringing us closer to the essence of translation than subconscious translation behaviors.

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