

Study of the Conversation Translation in Novels under the Guidance of Cooperative Principle: Based on *Huozhe* and *To Live* by Michael Berry

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Abstract: Conversations are one of the important elements in novels for showcasing character traits and advancing the plot, which allow readers to experience the emotions and personalities of characters in a more direct and vivid manner. The Cooperative Principle was proposed by the renowned linguist H. Paul Grice. He suggested that in the process of communication, both parties of the conversation tend to consciously or unconsciously adhere to certain principles to effectively cooperate and complete the communicative task, which he termed the Cooperative Principle. This principle consists of four maxims: the Maxim of Quantity, the Maxim of Quality, the Maxim of Relation, and the Maxim of Manner. This paper uses *To Live* as the corpus to expound on the conversational implicature arising from violations of these four maxims and, on this basis, examines the translation of discourse producing conversational implicature by Michael Berry. This study finds that when speakers violate the four maxims, the translator primarily employs a foreignizing translation strategy along with literal translations and additions, faithfully conveying the narrative style and linguistic features of the original work while also transmitting Chinese culture to the target readers. This achieves the translator's goal of allowing readers in English-speaking countries to experience the authentic essence of the work.

Keywords: *To Live*; Cooperative Principle; Translation.

1. Introduction

The novel *To Live* by Yu Hua vividly portrays the life experiences of an ordinary person, Xu Fugui, against the backdrop of a major historical context, including the civil war, the Great Leap Forward, and the People's Commune. Through Xu Fugui's narrative, the story depicts the loss of family members one after another, leading to his eventual solitude as he relies on an old cow for companionship. In 2003, Michael Berry's English translation of *To Live* was published by Anchor Books. For 20 years, the translation received widespread attention. Based on the Cooperative Principle proposed by H. Paul Grice, this paper explores the conversational implicature arising from violations of the four maxims and, on this basis, examines the translation of discourse that produces conversational implicature by Michael Berry.

2. Research Basis

2.1. Cooperative Principle and Conversational Implicature

Paul Grice's exploration of conversational implicature was delivered during the William James Lectures at Harvard in 1967, but it remained unpublished until 1975, when a partially misleading version was released. The complete theory was not made available until shortly after his passing in his book *Studies in the Way of Words* [1]. Grice put forward that our talk exchanges do not normally consist of a succession of disconnected remarks, and would not be rational if they did. They are characteristically, to some degree at least, cooperative efforts; and each participant recognizes in them, to some extent, a common purpose or set of purposes, or at least a mutually accepted direction [2: 26]. Grice defines the Cooperative Principle (CP): "Make your conversational

contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged. One might label this the Cooperative Principle [2: 26]." Under the general umbrella of the "Cooperative Principle", Grice distinguishes more specific maxims and submaxims, namely the Maxim of Quantity, the Maxim of Quality, the Maxim of Relation and the Maxim of Manner. On the version of Grice's theory, conversational implicature is a species of speaker meaning, and speaker meaning divides exhaustively into what is said and what is implicated [3]. Grice argued that a generalized conversational implicature, in which a certain form of words usually carries a certain implicature, can be cancelled in a certain case; either "explicitly... by the addition of a clause that states or implies that the speaker has opted out, or... contextually..., if the form of utterance that usually carries it is used in a context that makes it clear that the speaker is opting out" [2: 39]. At the core of Grice's account of Conversational Implicature is a certain assumption concerning the phenomenon that its proponents hope to explain and predict through various principles governing cooperative communicative exchanges, namely, in essence, conversational implicature are instances of speaker-meaning. More specifically, according to Grice, a speaker implicates something only if she intends to communicate, by saying something else [4].

2.2. Conversation Analysis in Novels

In novels, the characters' conversation is often an important means to promote the development of the plot. Only by deeply understanding the hidden meaning behind the characters' conversation can we fully understand the theme and characters of the novel. Conversation is an important means of character shaping, and a wonderful conversation

makes the character's characteristics more distinct. Adherence to the Cooperative Principle will produce certain conversational implicature, while violation of the Cooperative Principle will also produce certain conversational implicature. The analysis of the conversational implicature by pragmatist theory will help readers to better grasp the connotation of the work. In order to better promote plot development and shape character images, authors tend to describe in ways that violate the Cooperative Principle, and sometimes follow the "violation" description in translation. In order to preserve the original flavor as much as possible, the translation is sometimes adjusted considering the cultural background, language habits and other factors of the target readers. So that the translation will not pursue the "violation" effect and affect the reading experience.

2.3. The Relationship between Cooperative Principle and Conversational Translation

Cooperation Principle is one of the core concepts of the theory of "Conversational Implicature". The violation of the specific maxims of Cooperation Principle is often used as a means to depict the character, show the image of the character, express the "overtones", and thus produce certain conversational implicature, which is a very important descriptive method in novels. Wang believes that "Using the theory of 'conversational implicature' to analyze characters' conversations in novel translation helps translators to capture the 'overtones' hidden between the lines and thoroughly understand the meaning of characters' conversations, so as to improve the accuracy of the translation.[5]"

3. Conversation Analysis of To Live Based on Cooperation Principle

3.1. Introduction to To Live

To Live tells the story of the protagonist Xu Fugui, who is pushed along by the torrents of time and fate, struggling to survive amidst suffering as one family member after another passes away, leaving him alone in the end. Fugui comes from a landlord family and, in his youth, lived off his family's wealth, indulging in gambling, drinking, and debauchery, embodying the typical image of a lazy rich son. Later, he loses all his family assets to the casino owner Long Er, suddenly becoming poor. The death of his father awakens Fugui, and he begins to take on the responsibilities of a son, husband, and father. However, while on his way to buy medicine for his mother, he is drafted by the Nationalist Army. After enduring many hardships, he returns only to learn that his mother has already passed away and that his daughter Fengxia has become deaf and mute due to a high fever. During the period of the People's Commune, Fugui's wife is diagnosed with osteomalacia. Subsequently, his son Youqing dies from excessive bloodletting by a greedy doctor. Later, Fengxia also dies from massive bleeding during childbirth. After the tragic loss of his children, Fugui's wife also passes away. In the end, only Fugui, his son-in-law Erxi, and his grandson Kugen remain together. Erxi dies in an accident, and Kugen also meets an untimely death. At the story's conclusion, Fugui names the old water buffalo he bought "Fugui" and spends his remaining days in its company.

3.2. Conversation Analysis based on Maxim of Quantity

The Maxim of Quantity relates to the quantity of information to be provided, and under it fall the following maxims: (1) Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange). (2) Do not make your contribution more informative than is required[2:26].

Example 1. 他和我一样眼泪汪汪,赤着皮肉裂开的脚走过来,看到我蹲在路边,他叫了一声:“少爷。”

我对他喊:“别叫我少爷,叫我畜生。”

他摇摇头说:“要饭的皇帝也是皇帝,你没钱了也还是少爷。”[6:27]

Example 1 Translation:

My grandfather had taken him in at a young age after Chang Gen lost his parents. In the years that followed he never married. Just like me his eyes were flooded with tears, and the flesh of his bare feet was split open. Seeing me bent over beside the road, he called out, "Young master."

I screamed at him, "Don't call me young master, I'm an animal!"

He shook his head. "An emperor begging for food is still an emperor. You may have no money, but you're still young master." [7: 25]

The background of this conversation is that Fugui, after selling his family's assets, takes the money to the city to repay Long Er. He realizes the difficulty of earning this family fortune and his father's good intentions, leading to feelings of deep pain and guilt. At this moment, he encounters Changgen, a long-time worker in his family, who must leave due to the changes in Fugui's circumstances. This dialogue occurs as Changgen is about to leave. Fugui is overwhelmed with self-blame and suffering. When he hears Changgen refer to him as "young master," he rejects this title and insists that Changgen call him "animal" instead. Fugui's words disregard the Maxim of Quantity in communication; he could have simply refused Changgen's title, but he adds unnecessary information. This is both a self-deprecating remark and an outpouring of his inner turmoil. Changgen's response also violates the Maxim of Quantity; instead of directly rejecting Fugui's self-labeling, he uses a proverb to express his views, demonstrating his loyalty to the family. From the perspective of character development, Changgen is a marginal figure in this novel, and this dialogue highlights his simple and sincere nature. The use of proverbs in his speech aligns well with his uneducated background. In the translation, the original intent of "violation" is preserved. Fugui's phrase "叫我畜生" is translated as "I'm an animal," changing the subject to more directly convey Fugui's inner state. Additionally, in Changgen's second sentence, a logical connector is added to emphasize his true feelings, making the translation smoother and more coherent.

Example 2. 我们架起大炮,我知道这下是真要打仗了。有人走过去问连长:

“连长,这是什么地方?”

连长说:“你问我,我他娘的去问谁?” [6: 53]

Example 2 Translation:

The company commander ordered us to set up the cannons, and I knew that this time we were really going into battle. Someone walked over and asked the commander, "Commander, where are we?"

The commander said, "You're asking me? Well, how the

fuck am I supposed to know? Who the fuck am I supposed to ask?”[7: 48]

The background of this passage is that Fugui follows the Nationalist troops across the Yangtze River and arrives at a place very close to the battlefield. On the surface, the company commander does not directly answer the question; he shows disdain for the Maxim of Quantity. However, from his words, one can infer that the commander also does not know where they are at the moment. The additional information reflects the commander's anger and anxiety. In the translation, the original “violation” is completely followed, employing a magnification strategy, which involves adding seemingly meaningless words to amplify what appears to be excessive information. The translation enlarges the “extra” information by incorporating words like “fuck,” making it correspond pragmatically with the original text. This results in a more “wordy” translation that captures the commander's irritation and frustration. While the original contained only one question, the translation expands it into two questions, and this lengthy questioning amplifies the commander's irritation, vividly enhancing the narrative's emotional impact.

Example 3. 我将锅拿出来放在地上，两个年轻人挥起锄头就砸，才那么三五下，好端端的一口锅就被砸烂了。家珍站在一旁看着心疼得都掉出了眼泪，家珍对队长说：

“这锅砸了往后吃什么？”

“吃食堂。”队长挥着手说。“村里办了食堂，砸了锅谁都用不着在家做饭啦，省出力气往共产主义跑，饿了只要抬抬腿往食堂门槛里放，鱼啊肉啊撑死你们。”[6: 84-85]

Example 3 Translation:

She said to the team leader, “Now that our pot is broken, how are we supposed to eat?”

“You'll eat in the dining hall,” the team leader said, waving his arms. “The village is setting up a communal dining hall. Smash your pots and nobody will have to worry about cooking at home anymore. You'll save a lot of energy and at the same time we'll all be on our way toward communism. If you're hungry, just pick yourself up and head on over to the dining hall. We've got fish and meat-so much you'll choke to death!”[7: 76]

The background of this passage is during the period of the People's Communization Movement, when the village mandated that households get rid of all their cooking pots. The captain's words disregard the Maxims of Quantity and Quality, as he adds a lot of unnecessary information to emphasize the benefits of eating in the communal dining hall. Phrases like “If you're hungry, just pick yourself up and head on over to the dining hall. We've got fish and meat-so much you'll choke to death!” use exaggeration, violating the Maxim of Quality. The captain's underlying intention is to reassure Fugui and Jiazhen that breaking the pots is a good thing, and eating in the dining hall is convenient and hassle-free. In the translation, “吃食堂” is translated as “You'll eat in the dining hall.” Here, “dining hall” serves as a metonym for “the food in the dining hall,” making it easier for readers of the target language to understand the meaning. The sentence “砸了锅谁都用不着在家做饭啦” is expanded in the translation with the addition of “worry about,” making the speaker's intent more specific and showing that the speaker is aware of the listeners' concerns and anxieties. The sentence “饿了只要抬抬腿往食堂门槛里放” employs exaggeration, violating the Maxim of Quality, but the translation does not adhere to the original intent of this violation. Instead, it translates the conversational implicature directly for clarity, which diminishes the

speaker's strong tone and emotional intensity.

3.3. Conversation Analysis based on Maxim of Quality

The Maxim of Quality falls a supermaxim- “Try to make your contribution one that is true”-and two more specific maxims: (1) Do not say what you believe to be false. (2) Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence[2: 27].

Example 4. 我丈人是城里商会的会长，我很远就看到他站在街道中央喊：

“都站好了，都站好了，等国军一到，大家都要拍手，都要喊。”

有人看到了我，就嘻嘻笑着喊：“来啦，来啦。”

我丈人还以为是国军来了，赶紧闪到一旁。我两条腿像是夹马似的夹了夹妓女，对她说：

“跑呀，跑呀。”

在两旁人群的哄笑里，妓女呼哧呼哧背着我小跑起来，嘴里骂道：

“夜里压我，白天骑我，黑心肠的，你是逼我往死里跑。”[6:11]

Example 4 Translation:

My father-in-law was the head of the city's chamber of commerce. From far away I saw him standing in the center of the street, yelling, “Everybody get ready. Stand up straight, and as soon as the Nationalist army arrives everybody must clap and cheer.”

Someone noticed me and jokingly yelled, “They're coming! They're coming!”

My father-in-law thought the army had arrived and scuttled off to one side. My legs were wrapped around that whore as if I were riding a horse. I said to her, “Run! Run!”

With crowds bawling with laughter on both sides of the street, the prostitute, huffing and puffing, went into a light jog.

“At night you screw me and during the day you ride me!”

She cursed me as we went. “You cold hearted bastard! You're going to be the death of me!”[7: 10]

In the background of this scene, whether in the context of being a poor man or a son of a wealthy family, Fugui often flaunted himself in public by riding on the back of a prostitute. On this particular day, he had a prostitute carry him through the streets just as his father-in-law was organizing a welcome for the Nationalist army entering the city to reclaim lost territory. The omission of the word ‘有人’ clearly disrespects the Maxim of Quality; he deliberately obscured the identity of the visitors, creating ambiguity in meaning. This led Fugui's father-in-law to mistakenly believe that the arriving people were members of the Nationalist army. His intention was to embarrass both Fugui and his father-in-law together, which, from the perspective of plot development, resulted in a humorous effect. The words of the prostitute also disregard the Maxim of Quality; she used exaggeration to express her inner indignation at Fugui for causing her to be embarrassed and drawing attention to himself. In the translation, the purpose of adhering to the original intention of violation is observed. For the phrase “有人,” the translator employs an additional translation method. This is because Chinese is an associative language, where grammatical meaning and logical relationships in a sentence are expressed through the meanings of words or clauses. The subject can often be inferred from the context, resulting in many subject-less sentences. In contrast, English is an form-based language, where sentences typically require a subject; the translation

here conforms to the habits of the target language. The phrase “你是逼我往死里跑” is translated as “You’re going to be the death of me!” The expression “be the death of (one)” means “to be a source of extreme worry, distress, aggravation, or other effects too intense for one to endure” (Farlex Dictionary of Idioms, 2022). Here, the translator captures the core meaning of the original text, as the prostitute’s implication is that Fugui is deliberately trying to drive her to her end. The translation directly conveys this conversational implicature in a more straightforward manner, with an even stronger tone. It maintains the exaggeration found in the original, making the narrative more vivid and the character portrayal more robust, suggesting the absurdity of Fugui’s actions.

Example 5. 我就站在街上，都不知道该往哪里走。有一个提着一篮豆腐的熟人看到我后响亮地喊了一声：

“早啊，徐家少爷。”

他的喊声吓了我一跳，我呆呆地看着他。他笑咪咪地说：“瞧你这样子，都成药渣了。”[6: 21]

Example 5 Translation:

I stood in the middle of the street, not knowing where to go. Someone I knew carrying a basket of bean curd brightly called out to me, “Good morning, Mr. Xu!”

His voice nearly scared the hell out of me, and I blankly stared back at him. His eyes squinted as he smiled, and he said, “Look at you! You look like shit!”[7: 19]

This passage occurs at a significant turning point in Fugui’s early life—Long Er deceives him into losing all his family assets. After realizing that he has lost his ancestral fortune due to Long Er’s reckoning, Fugui undergoes a moment of shock as everything he once owned seems to vanish in an instant, leaving him in a daze. At this time, he encounters an acquaintance who greets him. When Fugui hears the person call him “Young Master Xu,” he is momentarily stunned. Though he is used to this title, on this morning of total loss, it feels particularly ironic. Fugui’s disheveled and dazed appearance leads the acquaintance to assume that he has been visiting prostitutes again, so he “look like shit.”

The speaker undoubtedly violates the Maxim of Quality here, using a metaphorical rhetorical device to mock Fugui for overindulgence that has left him physically weak and mentally drained. Grice clearly points out that irony, metaphor, hyperbole, and meiosis all arise from the speaker’s intentional violation of the Maxim of Quality. The term “药渣” (drug residue) originates from the remnants left after brewing traditional Chinese medicine. In this case, Berry employs a domestication translation strategy because Western readers may find it challenging to understand this concept due to a lack of exposure to traditional Chinese medicine. In the original text, “药渣” is used to describe Fugui’s listless state. Therefore, the translator chooses the term “shit,” effectively and vividly expressing Fugui’s condition within the context of his despair. Furthermore, this choice is very colloquial and vulgar, aligning with the speaker’s identity.

3.4. Conversation Analysis based on Maxim of Relation

Under the category of Relation Grice places a single maxim, namely, “Be relevant.” “Though the maxim itself is terse, its formulation conceals a number of problems that exercise me a good deal: questions about what different kinds and focuses of relevance there may be, how these shift in the course of a talk exchange, how to allow for the fact that subjects of conversation are legitimately changed, and so on[2: 27].”

Example 6. 有庆倔劲上来了，他抬起脑袋冲我说：

“我就是不上学。”

我说：“你屁股又痒啦。”

他干脆一转身，脚使劲往地上蹬着走进了里屋进了屋后喊：

“你打死我，我也不上学。”[6: 78]

Example 6 Translation:

Youqing stubbornly stood up and raised his head. “I’m not going!” he insisted.

“Is your ass getting itchy?” I asked him.

He turned right around and stomped inside. After entering the room, he yelled, “Even if you beat me to death I won’t go!”[7: 70]

This passage occurs in the context where Fugui gives away Fengxia to save money for Youqing’s schooling. Youqing is deeply saddened upon realizing that his sister was sent away so that he could go to school, leading him to strongly resist the idea of attending. The conversation takes place as Youqing is about to go to school, and he feels that if he doesn’t go to school, his sister might come back. Fugui’s words disregard the Maxim of Relation; he does not directly respond to Youqing’s request but uses an implied remark, “Is your ass getting itchy?” The implication is: “Do you want to get beaten?” From the text, it is evident that Fugui hopes his son can accept the fact that his sister is gone, and he also wants to avoid conflict with his son over this matter. Youqing receives this message and responds, “Even if you beat me to death I won’t go!”

In the translation, the original violation of the Maxim of Relation is preserved, and a literal translation method is employed to convey Fugui’s psychological state of violating this maxim. He doesn’t want to be too harsh with his son because Youqing’s actions stem from his love for his sister, and Fugui feels that Youqing is not at fault. In the translation of Youqing’s answers, logical conjunctions are added to make the translation more fluent and natural, strengthen the tone, and enable the target readers to better understand the emotions of the characters.

Example 7. 我跑到那间屋子，一个医生坐在里面正写些什么，我心里咚咚跳着走过去问：

“医生，我儿子还活着吗？”

医生抬起头来看了我很久，才问：

“你是说徐有庆？”

我急忙点点头。

医生又问：

“你有几个儿子？”

我的腿马上就软了，站在那里哆嗦起来，我说：

“我只有一个儿子，求你行行好，救活他吧。”

医生点点头，表示知道了，可他又说：

“你为什么只生一个儿子？”

这叫我怎么回答呢？我急了，问他：

“我儿子还活着吗？”

他摇摇头说：“死了。”[6: 126-127]

Example 7 Translation:

I ran down to the room he had pointed toward and saw a doctor sitting there, in the middle of writing something. My heart was pounding as I walked over to ask, “Doctor, is my son still alive?”

The doctor raised his head and looked at me for a long time before asking, “Do you mean Xu Youqing?”

I quickly nodded my head.

“How many sons do you have?” the doctor asked.

Immediately my legs went soft. Standing there trembling, I said, “I only have one son. I beg you, please, save my son.”

The doctor nodded his head to let me know that he understood, but then he asked, “How come you only had one son?”

How was I supposed to answer this? I got anxious and asked him, “Is my son still alive?”

He shook his head and said, “He’s dead.” [7: 36]

This passage occurs in the context where Youqing, along with his classmates, sincerely intends to donate blood to help the county magistrate’s wife who was in labor. Unfortunately, Youqing ends up dying from blood loss caused by a heartless doctor. This conversation takes place when Fugui arrives at the hospital and speaks with the doctor after hearing the news. Without a doubt, the doctor’s words violate the Maxim of Relation; when a speaker’s statements are unrelated to the topic at hand and fail to answer the question, there is usually a reason for doing so. In this case, the doctor does not directly respond to Fugui’s question because Youqing has already died. He speculates that if Fugui had more than one son, the pain of losing one might be lessened, which could lead to less blame directed at the hospital. Hence, he first asks how many sons Fugui has. Upon learning that Fugui has only one son and that Fugui is pleading for help to save him, the doctor retorts by questioning why he only has one son. The doctor’s repeated topic shifts make Fugui increasingly aware that Youqing’s situation might not be good. Consequently, Fugui directly asks the doctor if Youqing is still alive. This series of irrelevant questions from the doctor serves merely to gauge whether he can mitigate Fugui’s anger. He shows no concern for Fugui’s desperate anguish as a father and does not feel the slightest remorse for the hospital’s callous actions. These few lines effectively portray the image of a cold and indifferent doctor. The translation adopts a literal approach to the conversation in the original text, adhering to the purpose of violating the Maxim of Relation, which leaves room for readers to imagine and infer.

Example 8. 苦根仰着脑袋说:

“福贵，我头晕。”

我说：“快摘吧，摘完了你就去玩。”

苦根便摘起了棉花，摘了一阵他就跑到田埂上躺下，我叫他，叫他别再躺着，苦根说:

“我头晕。”

我想就让他躺一会吧，可苦根一躺下便不起来了，我有些生气，就说:

“苦根，棉花今天不摘完，牛也买不成啦。”

苦根这才站起来，对我说:

“我头晕得厉害。”[6: 189]

Example 8 Translation:

Kugen looked up at me and said, “Fugui, I feel dizzy.”

“Hurry up and start picking,” I prodded him. “After you finish you can go off to play.”

So Kugen started picking the cotton. After working for a while he went up to the ridge to lie down. I yelled at him, telling him to get up, but Kugen just repeated, “I feel dizzy.”

I figured I’d let him rest awhile longer, but once he lay down he didn’t get back up. I started to lose my temper a bit. “Kugen, if we don’t strip all the cotton today, we’re never going to buy that ox,” I warned him.

Only after hearing that did Kugen get up. He told me, “I’m really dizzy. My head hurts.”[6: 177-178]

This conversation takes place in the context where Fugui,

in order to avoid the cotton he has worked so hard to harvest getting wet from the rain, takes his grandson Kugen to the fields early in the morning to pick cotton. In this dialogue, Fugui’s response violates the Maxim of Relation; his implication is that Kugen is pretending to feel dizzy to avoid work because he wants to be lazy. Fugui warns Kugen that if he keeps this up, it will delay their cotton-picking. In Fugui’s eyes, this is just a child’s trick to get out of work. The translation preserves the original intent of violating the Maxim of Relation, employing both literal and free translation methods, and adds conjunctions to conform to the conventions of the target language, making the translation more fluid and natural. However, the emotion auxiliary words in Chinese cannot be literal translated into English, so the target readers cannot feel the tone of the speaker, which affects the presentation of emotions. From the point of view of language, there are great differences between Chinese and English modal particles. Compared to English, there are more particles in Chinese, and their positions in sentences are more flexible. Some can be omitted without altering the fundamental meaning of the sentence, only affecting its tone and attitude. Particles like “啦” belong to the category of emotional attachment auxiliary words, highlighting the psychological state and reaction to things at that time. Because Kugen is a child after all, Fugui does not want to be too strict with him, so he speaks with modal words to slow down the command meaning of the words.

3.5. Conversation Analysis based on Maxim of Manner

Under the Maxim of Manner, which Grice understands as relating not to what is said but, rather, to how what is said is to be said, includes the supermaxim-“Be perspicuous”-and various maxims such as: (1) Avoid obscurity of expression. (2) Avoid ambiguity. (3) Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity). (4) Be orderly[2: 27].

Example 9. 我娘心疼我，也跟着我下地干活，她一大把年纪了，脚又不方便，身体弯下去才一会儿工夫就直不起来了，常常是一屁股坐在了田里。我对她说:

“娘，你赶紧回去吧。”

我娘摇摇头说：“四只手总比两只手强。”

我说：“你要是累成病，那就一只手都没了，我还得照料你。”[6: 40]

My mother really loved me, so she would work with me in the fields. But she was getting old, and her feet made work difficult. Once she bent over it would take her a long time to stand up again. When she would sit down in the field, I’d say to her, “Mom, hurry up and get back inside.”

But Mom would shake her head and say, “Four hands are better than two.”

“If you get sick, then I’ll have to take care of you. And then there won’t be any hands!” I retorted.[7: 36]

The background of this dialogue is that Fugui, after awakening to reality, asks Long Er about renting five acres of land to start farming. In this exchange, both the mother’s and Fugui’s words employ the rhetorical device of metonymy, using “four hands” to refer to the two people and “hands” to stand in for the workers. Since metonymy requires the listener to infer meaning, it violates the Maxim of Manner. However, in a certain sense, it also adheres to the Cooperative Principle because it provides the speaker with the necessary information. The translation adopts a literal approach, maintaining the original text’s violation of the Maxim of

Manner, which makes the translation vivid and engaging. Additionally, conjunctions are included, and the sentence structure is adjusted. Since the original speech is informal, it lacks strong logical coherence. The translation enhances sentence logic through structural adjustments, resulting in a more fluid rendition.

Example 10. 一个女人直起了腰，用手背捶了捶，我听到她说：

“他挣的钱一半用在自己女人身上，一半用在别的女人身上。”

这时候福贵扶着犁走到她们近旁，他插进去说：

“做人不能忘记四条，话不要说错，床不要睡错，门槛不要踏错，口袋不要摸错。”

福贵扶着犁过去后，又扭过去脑袋说：

“他呀，忘记了第二条，睡错了床。”[6: 135]

Example 10 Translation:

As one of the women stretched her torso and massaged her back, I heard her say, “He

spends half his money on his wife and the other half on other men’s wives.”

It was then that, leaning on his plough, Fugui approached them “There are four rules people should remember,” announced Fugui as he made his way over to them. “Don’t say the wrong thing, don’t sleep in the wrong bed, don’t enter the wrong house and don’t rub the wrong pocket.”

Once Fugui got close to them he turned and said, “That guy, he forgot the second rule. He slept in the wrong bed.”[7: 125-126]

The background of this passage is that Fugui mentions how Jiazhen, upon learning of Youqing’s death, stops talking and resumes her work. The storyteller hears Fugui’s conversation with two women who are also working in the fields. Both the women and Fugui violate the Maxim of Manner, as the dialogue requires the listeners to interpret the meaning for themselves. The implied meaning of what the women say is that the man has been unfaithful, either having an affair or visiting prostitutes. Fugui’s words imply that one should be mindful of their words and actions, think twice before acting, and not indulge in verbal recklessness. A person should be devoted to their relationships, prioritize family, and avoid getting involved with others outside their marriage. Additionally, one should choose an appropriate career path and find the right direction in life. People should not be petty or cunning, seeking to obtain things that do not rightfully belong to them; as the saying goes, “A gentleman loves wealth, but acquires it through lawful means.” The translation retains the original intention of violating the Maxim of Manner, allowing readers to imagine and reflect on the nuances. The phrase “别的女人”(other women) is translated as “other men’s wives,” contrasting with “his wife” in the previous sentence, which emphasizes that this man has a family while still being involved with others, highlighting his poor character. In translating Fugui’s words, the passive meaning in Chinese is rendered in the active voice, changing the logical subject from “object” to “person.” This adjustment helps target language readers better understand the dialogue’s

implications, while the imperative tone is made stronger to convey urgency.

4. Conclusion

Based on an analysis of the conversations in *To Live* and their translation through the lens of the Cooperative Principle, this study finds that violations of this principle increase the conversational implicature, making the dialogue more vivid, engaging, and thought-provoking, while also contributing to the development of the plot and the shaping of character portrayals. Michael Berry’s translation strives to convey the original meaning and style comprehensively, and thus, where the original text violates the Cooperative Principle, the translation also generally adheres to the intent of those violations, allowing English-speaking readers to experience the authentic essence of the work. Zhu Guangqian, a famous esthetician and translator, asserts that “being faithful to the original text” entails not only fidelity to the superficial literal meaning but also to the emotional, ideological, stylistic, and rhythmic elements simultaneously. In this study, Michael Berry employs a foreignizing translation strategy that faithfully conveys the narrative style and linguistic features of the original work, transmitting Chinese culture to the target language readers and achieving the translator’s objectives. Due to the significant differences between English and Chinese-where English emphasizes form and Chinese favors meaning-Berry uses appropriate conjunctions in the translation of *To Live* to reveal the internal logic of the translated text. This ensures that the translation remains faithful to the original while also adhering to the conventions of the target language, resulting in a smooth and natural translation.

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