Research on the Translation of Official Titles of Zizhi Tongjian with Computer Aid

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Abstract. With the application of computer technology in the field of translation, Chinese classic translation has become one of the focuses of translation research. The cultural information of official titles in ancient my country is very rich, which is of great significance to the study of official titles' translation. Zizhi Tongjian is an outstanding work in Chinese history, with historical significance and high historical value. This article is based on computer technology, based on the "fusion of horizons", "expected horizons" and "aesthetic distance" in the theory of reception aesthetics, and studies the English translation of official titles in the two translations of "Zi Zhi Tong Jian". The official title translation methods used by different translators.

Keywords: Official Titles, Zizhi Tongjian, Reception Aesthetics Theory, Translation Method, Computer Aid

1. Introduction

The English translation of Chinese classics is of great significance to the spread of Chinese culture. The study on the translation of ZiZhi TongJian can further promote the spread of Chinese classics in the West.

ZiZhi TongJian is China's first chronological history writing, and it has a very important position in the history of Chinese official history. Its content is mainly about politics, military and ethnic relations, as well as economy, culture and historical figures. Its translation and research in the West reflects the Western research focus on ancient Chinese culture. There are two famous English translations of ZiZhi TongJian, written by Achilles Fang of Harvard University [1] and Rade de Crespigny of Australian National University [2-4].

Some scholars at home and abroad have studied the official titles in ancient Chinese classics. Hucker [5] published the book A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China, in which he tried to embody the functional characteristics of the official position in the translation. Michael Loewe [6] published A Biographical Dictionary of the Qin, Former Han and Xin Periods, 221B.C.-AD.24, introducing more than 6,000 ancient Chinese emperors, officials and other celebrities. Wu Fang [7] studied the misplacement of official posts in the English translation, and proposed to use corresponding and explanation. Wang Linhai [8] put forward the prototype equivalence in translating The Annuals of Kingdoms in East Zhou Dynasty, and established ancient Chinese official titles
translation corpus. Li Shuyan [9] discussed the translation strategies of ancient Chinese official titles in Science and Civilization in China.

This paper will make a comparative analysis on the translation of official titles in ZiZhi TongJian from the perspective of Reception Aesthetics theory, by comparing the translations in the two translations versions, and finally summarize the translation methods used by the two translators.

2. Reception aesthetics theory
Reception Aesthetics theory [10], originated in Germany and evolved from modern hermeneutics, is one of the Western literary criticism theories. The main representatives of this theory are Hans Robert Jauss and Wolfgang Iser at University of Konstanz.

2.1. Fusion of horizons
In translating, the two “horizons” should be merged to achieve “fusion of horizons” so that both translator and reader could surpass the original horizon to reach a new horizon.

The fusion of horizons in translation is divided into the following two stages. On the first stage, there is the fusion of the original text' horizon and the translator’s horizon. The translators fuses the original authors view with their own horizon. In this fusion process, the translator's horizon collides and the horizon of the original text. This new fusion of horizon is the result of the translator's understanding of the original. On the second stage, there is the fusion of the translator's horizon and the reader's horizon. The translator should have a deep understanding of the cultural background of the readers to enable them to accept the translation. Therefore the translator's horizon and the target reader's horizon are merged. Finally, the translation is completed in the process of the two fusions of horizons.

2.2. Horizon of expectations
The concept “horizon of expectations”, put forward by Jauss [11], was originated from Hermeneutics and Phenomenology in the 1960s. It refers to the thinking orientation or the structure in reading, constituted by reader's literary reading experience. Whenever the reader is going to read a new article, he reorganizes his past reading experience into experience horizon and forms the basic expectation. Therefore, when translating literary works, translators should consider readers' horizon of expectations, and consider whether the work can attract the readers and be understood and accepted. Only when the reader's horizon of expectations is consistent with the text’s horizon, can the work be accepted by the readers.

2.3. Aesthetic distance
When new literary works can't satisfy fixed horizon of expectations of the reader, the difference or separation between the two is called "aesthetic distance"[12]. If the aesthetic distance is too large, that is, beyond the reader's horizon of expectations, it will cause the readers confused. If the aesthetic distance is too small, that is, be consistent with the reader's expectation, it will cause readers to aesthetic fatigue.

3. Official titles under analysis
This paper classifies official titles in ZiZhi TongJian according to Dictionary of Chinese Official Systems [13] and A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China.

3.1. Official titles in Han Dynasty
Han Dynasty continued and expanded the government structure of Qin Dynasty, but the internal responsibilities changes lead to the major structure changes later. The main official titles of the central government of Han Dynasty are entitled “San Gong Jiu Qing”. Han began with the Qin pattern of what is called a “strong prime minister-ship”. The major official titles of Han Central Government. In local government of Han dynasty, the local bureaucratic system contained the system of prefectures
and counties and the system of vassal state which interacted with each other.

3.2. Official titles in the Three Kingdoms Period
During this period, China was in a situation of tripartite confrontation and vassal contending for hegemony. The types of officials include civil officer, military officer, central officials and local officials. So the official titles during this period has a wide range and a certain historical specificity.

4. Translation methods of official titles
Peter Newmark proposed the translation methods in A Textbook of Translation [14]. Cultural equivalence is used to translate a SL cultural word into a TL cultural word. Descriptive equivalence is used to explain the connotation of SL cultural word. Functional equivalence is applied to translate a culture-specific word into a culture-free word, sometimes with a new specific term to neutralize or generalize the SL word. Generalized translation is to use less specific words to express the meaning of SL cultural word.

4.1. Cultural equivalence
Eg. 1: “gui lin xing , shang shu yue” : “chen wen san chen bu gui , zhuo shi wei xiang.” (<zi zhi tong jian> di wu shi si juan).
Rafe: When Chen Gui left to take up his post, he sent in a report saying, "I have heard that when the courses of the sky are out of order, one should promote an ordinary gentleman to become chancellor."
"Xiang" was the highest official of central government in ancient China. It was created in the pre-Qin period to assist the emperor in governance or recommend talents to the emperor. "Chancellor" refers to head of government in some western countries. The previous reading experience and knowledge of the readers of ZiZhi TongJian help them to form their horizons of expectations. Only when target readers' horizons of expectations are in line with the translation, can they understand and accept the translation. In this example, target readers are familiar with the word “chancellor” and their powers. Naturally, it’s easy for them to understand the connotation of "" in imperial China.

Eg.2: er shi er nian xi feng wan hou, huang chu er nian jin jue wei gong. (<zi zhi tong jian> di liu shi jiu juan)
Achilles Fang: In the 22nd (217 A.D.), he was changed to Lord of Wan. In the 2nd year of Huang-chu, his rank was advanced to Duke.
In ancient China, “gong” was the highest title of nobility. A Duke is a nobleman of the highest rank in the nobility of some countries. “公” and “Duke” both have cultural connotation and achieve an equivalence. The fusion of horizons between the readers' past experience and present knowledge can be achieved. So, this translation can successfully convey the meaning of source text.

4.2. Descriptive equivalence
Eg. 3: zhong chang shi hou lan shang jian wu qian pi, di ci jue guan nei hou. (<zi zhi tong jian> di wu shi shi juan)
Rafe: The Regular Palace Attendant Hou Lan presented five thousand rolls of silk, and the Emperor awarded him enfeoffment as a Marquis within the Imperial Domain.
“Guan nei hou” was a nobleman who had the right to impose tax but didn't have fiefs. This word contains cultural-loaded concepts which only exists in ancient China and is strange to English readers. Therefore, it is impossible to find an equivalent target word. The translation “Marquis within the Imperial Domain” conveys incomplete information of the original word. So the target readers may encounter understanding obstacles in the fusion of horizon because of different cultural and educational backgrounds, thus produces the aesthetic distance. Therefore, descriptive equivalence is an effective way to translate this kind of words. The translator should add more information to explain this word's connotation by using annotation within or beyond the sentence.

Eg.4: wang bian zhi wei an xiang hou, zhu you ci jian yuan, pei guo ding yi ji di huang men shi
lang ao bing ji nan kou , jie zhi zhi dang ye. (< zi zhi tong jian > di li shi jiu juan)

Achilles Fang: The King degraded Chin to be Lord of An-hsiang. He put to death the Anti-espionage officer of the Right, Ting Yi, a native of Peiguo, and his younger brother the Assistant Chamberlain, and male members of their families; both were partisans of CHIN.

“You ci jian yuan” was a position to supervise treacherous court official, which was set up by Cao Cao at the end of Han Dynasty. “Anti-espionage” means secret action to prevent a spy from finding out its secrets. So this translation succeeds to transmit the complete meanings of the source text. “huang men shi lang” means the one who serves the emperor and conveys the commands. A chamberlain is an official who managed the home and servants of a king, queen or important family in past centuries. Achilles Fang’s translation facilitates a better understanding of the original words by considering the readers’ aesthetic taste and receptivity.

4.3. Functional equivalence

Eg.5: man yi bu gong, ba zu wei jiang. (< zi zhi tong jian > di wu qi juan)

Rafe: ...and when the barbarians fail to show proper respect, one may raise a common soldier as a command.

In ancient China, “jiang” is a high-ranking officer in the army, who can give a direction or a command to soldiers. The culture-free word “command” means a position of highest usually military authority. Thus “command” is functionally equivalent to “jiang”. Fusion of horizons occurs between readers’ past reading experience and their present feelings in reading. As for readers of Zi Zhi Tong Jian, they must have read traditional Chinese classics before. So the readers’ horizon of expectations requires translations to convey the meaning of the original text. Another word "general" means an officer of high rank in the army. There exists cultural equivalence between “jiang” and “general”. In the author’s opinion, “general” is more appropriate than “command”.

Eg.6: chun, zheng yue, yi yi lang kong xian wei zong sheng hou, feng kong zi si. (< zi zhi tong jian > di li shi jiu juan)

Achilles Fang: Spring, first month( Fer.10 - Mar.10 ). The Counsellor KUNG HSIEN was appointed Lord Worship of Sage, in which capacity he was to offer sacrifices to Confucius. “Yilang” was a title set during the Qin Dynasty, followed by the Western Han Dynasty. It refers to the man who gives advice to the emperor and is engaged in scholarly debates. There is no equivalent word in western culture. Thus, Achilles Fang found a functionally equivalent expression as “Counsellor”. A counsellor is a person to advise people with problems, especially personal problems. This English word manifests the general meaning of “Yilang” and target readers can understand it. This translation can meet target readers’ horizon of expectations. However, the author thought it should be altered for a more wonderful effect. Therefore, the author suggests to translate “Yilang” into “Imperial Counsellor”. This translation can not only satisfy readers’ horizon of expectations, but also broaden their horizons.

4.4. Generalized translation

Eg.7: you zhou ci shi ge qiu jian yi gao gou li wang wei, gong shu wei qin pan, du zhu jun tao zhi. (<zi zhi tong jian > di qi shi wu juan)

Achilles Fang: The king of Kao-kou-li, having rebelled several times and made incursions, governor of Youzhou, commanding various forces and attacked.

The feudal administration supervision system was created originally by Emperor Wu of Han. “ci shi” is in charge of inspection on counties. A governor is an official acting as ruler, chief executive, or nominal head of political unit. That is, “governor” is the hypernym of “ci shi”. So the target readers can't understand the specific meaning of this word. This translation fails to meet readers' horizon of expectations, and will cause readers' misunderstanding of traditional Chinese official titles. Rafe translated “ci shi” into “Inspector”, whose job is to find out whether people are obeying official regulations. This translation can represents a cultural equivalence to “ci shi”, and is a more appropriate translation.
5. Conclusion
Through big data research in the information age, it is found that some of the translations of the two translators meet the expectations of readers and can achieve the integration of vision. However, several translations are inappropriate. The study also found that the two authors used four different translation methods: cultural equivalence, functional equivalence, descriptive equivalence and broad translation. Using different translation methods will lead to different readers' receptive ability.

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