



Translation Analysis of Metaphor Translation in the *Black Slaves*

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Abstract

Metaphor is not only a rhetorical method, but also a cognitive model. This article firstly identifies the metaphors in the first five chapters of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and then finds the corresponding Chinese translation from Lin's *Black slaves*. Through the comparison of the original and the translation, this article tried to explore Lin Shu's metaphorical cognitive process in translation and metaphorical translation methods.

Key words: Metaphor; Cognition; Translation Analysis; Black Slave

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INTRODUCTION

Lin Shu (1852-1924), his literary name Weilu, is a famous writer and translator in the last years of Qing Dynasty in China. *Black Slaves*, which is the first Chinese translation of the American modern writer Mrs. Stowe's novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Although the study of Lin's *Black Slaves* has been conducted for a long time, but the former studies mainly focused on the purpose of translation, the process of translation, the subjectivity of the translator, the theory of manipulation and so on. From the point of view of cognitive linguistics, this paper summarizes the six translation methods used by Lin Shu in the process of translation by analyzing the metaphors in the first five chapters of Mrs. Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and the corresponding translation slots in Lin's *Black Slave*.

1. LITERAL TRANSLATION

Despite the many differences between English and Chinese, many metaphors in English can still be found in Chinese, which is determined by the commonality of human culture. Therefore, Lin Shu adopted literal translation as one of the methods to translate the metaphors from the source text.

Example (1): They are all labor-saving machines themselves, every one of 'em. (Stowe, 2009, p.19)

Lin: 吾视其人，即吾所使之机器。

This is a quotation from the original master of George, a black slave, when he was arguing with the owner of the factory where George worked in. "Labor-saving machine" refers to the slave owner's black slave. Lin Shu chose to use literal translation to translate the source text into "吾所使之机器", which not only preserves the metaphorical metaphor of the original text, but also re-creates the cold and brutal image of the slave owner who treat slaves as if they were machines, so that the reader of the translation can get to experience the same emotional effects as the original reader when they read the translation sentence.

2. USING SIMILE TO TRANSLATE METAPHORS

From the perspective of rhetoric, metaphors and similes are closely related, both of which are composed of vehicle and tenor, and the corresponding linguistic effect is obtained through the similarity between different things and categories. The biggest difference between the two is that simile have obvious signaling words, while metaphors do not. In the process of translation, in the face of many metaphors unique to English, translators often choose to translate metaphors by the use of simile. There is no shortage of such examples in Lin's translation of *Black Slaves*.

Example 1: Why, not a cruel man, exactly, but a man of leather,—a man alive to nothing but trade and profit,—

cool, and unhesitating, and unrelenting, as death and the grave. (Stowe, 2009, p.50)

Lin: 解而培曰: 彼性情坚如牛革, 而复严冷难近, 并无一隙慈善。

This sentence is a description of the personal characteristic of the slave traders, Haley. The original author used the word “leather” to as the vehicle to refer to the traders personality so as to project the physical characteristics of leather to the character of Haley. Thus, the original “a man of leather” does not refer to “a man made of leather”, but rather refers to Haley is a brazen, callous person. In translating this sentence, Lin Shu used a simile to translate the original metaphor which not only retains the metaphorical meaning of “bull leather”, but also vividly reproduces the image characteristics of Haley, which is highly faithful to the original text.

3. DELETION

Although in the process of metaphor translation, translators can choose various translation methods, but many great differences between English and Chinese culture may also cause the untranslatability of metaphors. In order to avoid cultural conflicts caused by improper metaphor translation, Lin Shu sometimes had to choose to sacrifice the vehicles or metaphorical connotation of the source text in the process of translation, so that the content of the original text can be expressed in a more understandable way when it comes into the target culture.

Example 1: And the trader leaned back in his chair, and folded his arm, with an air of virtuous decision, apparently considering himself a second Wilberforce (Stowe, 2009, p.11)

Lin: Deleted.

This sentence is the novel’s description of the slave trader Haley. In the original text, Haley had just made a false statement, hoping to persuade the owner to sell his slaves. Obviously, “a second Wilberforce” is a metaphor. “Wilberforce” refers to the British House of Commons member William Wilberforce, a famous philanthropist and abolitionist in British history, who was one of the prominent leaders of the abolition of slavery in England. Here, the author projected the image of the British abolitionist to the slave trader Haley, so as to show the hypocrisy of Haley in a vivid and ironic way. The reason why Lin Shu chose to delete this metaphor is mainly because that the Chinese people at that time knew very little about the Abolition movement in England, and it was difficult to find a counterpart that could match it at home, which caused the metaphorical loss of the translation.

Example 2: This same gentleman, having heard of the fame of George’s invention, took a ride over to the factory, to see what this intelligent chattel had been about. (Stowe, 2009, p.19)

Lin: 嗣闻其为厂主创制机器, 声名喧噪, 亦自临视。

The sentence describes George’s contribution to the owner of the factory as a mechanic. The author used the expression “intelligent chattel” as the vehicle while “George” the tenor. The explanation of “chattel” in the Collins dictionary interpreted as “the property owned by the individual”. The author uses this metaphor in order to show the miserable situation that the slave is regarded as the property of their master. However, at that time the Chinese people did not understand the slave trade in the Americas, so it is difficult to understand the American slave owners as slaves as personal private property. So Lin Shu chose to omit the metaphor here, using only the Chinese word “其” to refer to the slave owner.

Example 3: “Nothing,—only Eliza came in here, after dinner, in a great worry, crying and taking on, and said you were talking with a trader, and that she heard him make an offer for her boy—the ridiculous little goose!” (Stowe, 2009, p.46)

Lin: 妻曰: 前日意里赛至吾, 许道君与海留密计将鬻其子海留, 余意君必不残忍至此, 或意里赛听误。

In English, goose often stands for stupidity and clumsiness. Here Emily intends to use this metaphor in front of her husband to accuse Eliza in the hope of finding out her husband’s real attitude. However, the “goose” in the Chinese does not have the metaphorical meaning we mentioned before. As a result, in order to avoid distortion caused by literal translation, Lin Shu deleted the metaphor and replaces it with “或意里赛听误”. Although it does not retain the original metaphor, it still embodies the tentative meaning of its words.

Example 4: “Well, Tom’s got the real article, if ever a fellow had” (Stowe, 2009, p.7)

...when there is the genuine article, and no mistake... (Stowe, 2009, p.7)

Example 5: There’s an article, now! You might make your fortune on that ar gal in Orleans, any day. (Stowe, 2009, p.9)

Lin: Deleted.

In the original novel, the author has used the word “article” many times to refer to the characters in the novel. In English, the word “article”, in addition to its basic meaning, refers to “genuine and fine things”. By using the word “article” as the vehicle of the slaves appearing in the novel, the author not only highlighted the relationship between the slaves and their owners but also the slaves’ terrible living condition without any human rights. But Lin Shu chose to delete this metaphor, and the reason might be that he thought that the ideology of American slave owners treating slave as property is not in line with the mainstream values of the Chinese readers at that time.

4. FREE TRANSLATION

There are many commonly used metaphors in English and Chinese, and with the increase of the frequency of their use, they gradually form a fixed match, but because

different languages have different ways of understanding metaphorical metaphors, in translation, Lin Shu also translates the fixed metaphors in the source language by means of translation on the basis of full understanding of the meaning of the metaphor.

Example 1: His conversation was in free and easy defiance of Murray's Grammar, and was garnished at convenient intervals with various profane expressions, which not even the desire to be graphic in our account, shall induce us to transcribe. (Stowe, 2009, p.6)

Lin: ...而谈吐鄙秽, 近乎侗荒。

This sentence is based on a description of Haley's manners as a slave dealer in the first chapter of Uncle Tom's Cabin. "Murray's Grammar" is a metaphor, according to the notes in the original text of the novel, "Murray" refers to the famous American 18th-century scholar Lindley Murray (1745-1826), who was the most authoritative grammarian in the United States at that time, whose major publication was *English Grammar* (1795). Because of this, it is easy to understand the meaning of "Murray's Grammar" in the source text as standard and correct English grammar. The author used this metaphor to satirize Haley's failure in conforming to grammatical norms. In Lin's time, most Chinese knew little about English, and the translation of "Murray's Grammar" as "穆雷的语法" would have puzzled readers. The word "侗荒" was firstly used in the period of Wei-Jin Northern and Southern Dynasties to satirize the remote and desolate north and the vulgar contempt of the North people. Lin Shu used the Chinese word "侗荒" to successfully reproduce the vulgar and unlettered image of the character.

Example 2: His black hair, fine as floss silk, hung in glossy curls about his round, dimpled face, while a pair of large dark eyes, full of fire and softness, looked out from beneath the rich, long lashes, as he peered curiously into the apartment. (Stowe, 2009, p.7)

Lin: 雏发未燥, 笑处辄动微涡, 两目精光耿然。

The above sentence is a portrait of the son of Eliza, in which "full of fire and softness" is a metaphor, and "fire" refers not to the real "fire", but to the brightness of his eyes. The Chinese word "耿" has the same meaning of "炯" which means "bright". Lin Shu translated this sentence as "两目精光耿然", which successfully conveyed the metaphorical connotation of the source text.

Example 3: He folded his arms, tightly pressed in his lips, but a whole volcano of bitter feelings burned in his bosom, and sent streams of fire through his veins. (Stowe, 2009, p.20)

Lin: 哲而治忿极, 血脉僨起, 颜色灰败。

The sentence depicts the anger of George after being humiliated by his master. "A whole volcano..." is apparently not the real "volcano", but the use of the metaphor to express the violent physical reaction sparking by the anger. Lin Shu's translation here is "血脉僨起, 颜色灰败", retaining the metaphorical connotation of the source text.

Example 4: I tell you, Eliza, that a sword will pierce through your soul for every good and pleasant thing your

child is or has; it will make him worth too much for you to keep! (Stowe, 2009, p.27)

Lin: 矧小海雷慧黠如此, 他售之期恐愈促, 尔之伤心, 无穷期矣。

In this sentence, "a sword will pierce through your soul" is a metaphor, literally, meaning "a sword will penetrate your soul". However, "soul" is an abstract concept which cannot be "pierced" as a physical entity. In fact, the "sword" serves as the grief of losing a child. Therefore, Lin Shu translated this sentence as "尔之伤心, 无穷期矣", so as to describe the pain that Eliza may face.

5. ADDITION

In order to dig out the deep connotation of some metaphors, Lin Shu also adopted the method of addition in the process of translating the source text. to the translation to reflect the deep intentions behind some metaphors.

Example 1: I hope you'll remember that you promised, on your honor, you wouldn't sell Tom, without knowing what sort of hands he's going into. (Stowe, 2009, p.44)

Lin: 解而培曰: 海留尔将吾汤姆去从转鬻之人当择善而畀, 勿令吾鬻失所。

This is a conversation between Mr. Shelby and Haley when they are negotiating on the issue of selling his slaves. The word "hands" at the end of the sentence is clearly a metaphor. It is easy to see in the context that "hands" refers to other slave owners who might buy the slave, Tom. So Lin Shu translated it as "转鬻之人". Together with the last half of the sentence "without knowing what sort of hands he's going to be in", we can easily find out Mr. Shelby's intention to prevent Haley from selling Tom at will without knowing the temper of the buyer. "失所" means to lose one's shelter, Lin Shu consciously added this expression to highlight the kindness of the character.

6. REPLACING THE VEHICLE

Lin Shu also chose to replace the vehicles of metaphors in the source text with other vehicles in line with the aesthetic of Chinese cultural.

Example 1: My wife would not part with her for her weight in gold. (Stowe, 2009, p.9)

Lin: 吾妻之意, 虽积金如奴之高, 亦非所屑。

The sentence should be translated as: "就算是给我像她一样重的金子, 我的妻子也不会愿意与她分离" according to the method of literal translation. Lin Shu, however, translated this sentence as "虽积金如奴之高", replacing the concept of "weight" into "height". Such translation seems to be different with the source text, but it is in line with the habits of Chinese. Chinese people often say "积金成斗", and "斗" is a unit of length, so it is

obvious that Lin Shu's translation conforms to the Chinese idiom and cognitive methods.

Example 2: "That's easy to say for people that are sitting on their sofas and riding in their carriages. (Stowe, 2009, p.27)

林译：此语第当出之安乐窝中人耳。

The author used the sentence "People that sitting on theirs sofas and riding in their carriages" to describe comfortable state of life in a metaphorical way. So Lin translated this sentence into "安乐窝中人". According to the *Song History*, "安乐窝" initially referred to Shao Yong, the Recluses of the Song Dynasty in Sumenshan, and later referred to comfortable accommodations. Obviously, Lin Shu's translation is very authentic.

CONCLUSION

There are many metaphorical phenomena in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Lin Shu used literal translation to deal with the metaphors which can be completely understood and accepted by Chinese readers. As for some special metaphors in the source text, Lin Shu used multiple ways such as using simile, free translation, addition and replacing the original vehicle according to the differences in the conceptual acceptance of these metaphors. By doing so, the readers in target culture can fully perceive

the metaphorical meaning of the source text. The deletion is used for metaphors that may cause confusion among the target readers. Lin's *Black Slaves* was of high literary and social value under the historical and social environment at that time, and the methods he used to translate those metaphors are worthy of further in-depth studies.

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