

The Manipulation of Ideology in Children's Literature Translation: A Comparative Study on Two Chinese Versions of *Charlotte's Web*

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Abstract

The manipulation theory focuses translation studies on the outside of the text, pointing out that ideology mainly comes from the behavior patterns, conventions and beliefs of a certain mainstream class or a certain stage of society as a whole, which will unconsciously manipulate the translator's way of dealing with the linguistic and cultural characteristics of the literary source text. Based on this concept, this paper aims to expand the theoretical study of children's literature translation by making a comparative study of Kang Xin's and Ren Rong's translations of *Charlotte's Web*, and finds that different social ideologies manipulate the translator's personal translation purpose, which in turn prompts them to choose different translation methods and strategies in terms of language style and culture loaded words, resulting in two different versions with different styles.

Key words: Ideology; Children's literature translation; *Charlotte's web*; Comparative study

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INTRODUCTION

Traditional translation study is that translation belongs to the linguistic original text oriented transformation, focusing on the faithfulness and the approach of the source text from the thoughts that the translator has to rely on the source texts, which endows the translator with a rather neglected position for a long time. However since the 1980s, there has been a "Cultural Turn" in translation studies, in which André Lefevere specifically explained the concept of "Ideology" in his Manipulation Theory and also shifted the correspondence between language structure and language form, which was most concerned points by linguists, to the meaning of the target text and the source text in their respective cultural systems (Tan, 2004, p.242). The advance of the new concept greatly breaks through the linguistic restrictions of the traditional translation studies, and turns to study a specific translation under a historical context, which are both more conducive to do an in-depth study of the choice of translation texts and the application of translation strategies. Children's literature is obviously the branch of the literary work, because it expresses instructive central idea with attractive language and reproduces the social life of a certain period and a certain region. Compared with adult literature, children's literature also has its particularity. Peter Hunt notes: "Children's Literature might be a contradiction in terms: the values and qualities which constitute 'literariness' cannot naturally be sustained either by books designed for an audience of limited experience, knowledge, skill and sophistication, or by the readers." (Hunt, 2001, p.2) Actually "Children's literature is not produced by children, but a kind of literature written by adults to children as a whole. Therefore, children's literature fundamentally embodies the cultural expectation of 'adults' (adult society)" (Wang, 2006, p.45) Because of its particularity, under the different historical contexts in which Chinese government wants to let children gain perspective in new ways, translators in different historical

period might apply different translation strategies to deal with the same source text for Chinese children who are born in different social circumstances to introduce the exotic landscape and the western culture. What's more, children's literature translation deserve to pay much attention to study as there are so many translated versions of one book to be chosen by children in the market. Therefore, there is an actually innovative perspective to deeply explore the translation of CL from the viewpoint of Ideology. The paper chooses *Charlotte's Web* to do a comparative study on two Chinese versions for finding out different translation methods and strategies, which wishes to provide actual research experience to those scholars who aim to translate children's literature.

1. IDEOLOGY

It was the term "ideology" which referred to "science of ideas" that was created by French rationalist philosopher Antoine Destutt de Tracy in the 1790s from its origin in Greek¹. The concept of ideology insisted by Tracy is no more than the category of philosophical epistemology. From then on, its definitions varied and narrowed down, ranging from positive to negative, pejorative to neutral in their senses. The negative sense of ideology is exemplified in the period undertaken by Marxist tradition, which is regarded as "false consciousness" under the effect of which ideology is defined as "a system of false distorted or otherwise misguided beliefs" (Pérez, 2003, p.3). Later on, Fawcett (1998, p.106) contributed an article "Ideology and translation" to Routledge encyclopedia of Translation Studies, which demonstrates "an ideological approach to translation can be implied in some of the earliest translations' instances known to us throughout several centuries, individuals and institutions applied their specific beliefs to the creation of certain efforts in translation" (ibid, pp.106-107). He provides a general and historical hypothesis between ideology and translation, believing that "the problem is in part one of the definition and category". As time flies by, more and more scholars focus their attentions on ideology in translation studies. Perez collects the latest academic papers in her *Apropos of Ideology* to know about the latest progress made in this respect. Sergio (ibid, pp.131-144) proposes an article about the underlying ideologies governing interpreting. However, it is Tymoczko (ibid, pp.181-201) who advocates in her paper "that all ideological messages are subject to deconstruction and that translation studies would benefit from a constantly skeptical attitude towards its own pre-established ideologies" (ibid, p.20). In addition, the other two scholars listed in this book are Sehnaz Tahir-Gurcaglar (ibid, pp.113-129) who

explores the ideological backdrop of the state-sponsored Translation Bureau in her paper, and Rosemary Arrojo (ibid, pp.165-180) who expands our understanding of ideology and our treatment of translation through an exercise of self-criticism in reading Edgar Allan Poe's *The Oval Portrait*. 1990s actually saw the formation of ideological approach in translation studies. The publication of *Translation, History, and Culture* (Lefevere, 1992), compiled by Lefevere and Bassnett, marked a breakthrough that the most important consideration in translation is the ideological one. And then he gives a full explanation about the relationship between ideology and practical translation in his masterpiece *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame* (Lefevere, 2004), regardless of the linguistic approaches to translation.

According to the different understanding of the concept of "ideology", there are two categories that derive from domestic translation ideology studies. The first sort of research regards "ideology" as the political environment in a certain historical period, and demonstrates that the political stream of thought has a manipulative effect on translation, so that the "ideology" initially focuses on literary translation commentation, which have even included news, publicity and other styles in the past decade that contain political factors into the scope of discussion to extract the strong evidence of "ideological" manipulation (Hu & Jia, 2010; Liu & Li, 2014). As the intervention of political ideology appears to be invisible, the ideological opposition in literary translation swiftly declined, and the mechanism that how political "ideology" affects the translator in the new situation needs to be understood and discussed. The second type of research directly quotes the relevant principle of "ideology" in the original or mainstream field (Xin, 2004), and macroscopically combines it with cross-cultural translation studies (Sun, 2003), literary translation studies (Wang, 2003), translation criticism (Lü, 2008) and so on. The scholars consciously introduce the concept of "ideology" into translation studies and endeavor to further subdivide the concept.

The paper will choose Lefevere's translational ideology of Manipulation Theory to develop a comparative study of classical children's literature. Nevertheless, through searching for the relevant documents online and in the library, it is found that there are fewer academic researches on the translation of CL from the translational ideology than that of adult's literature, which shows there is an innovative perspective to do a deep study. According to Lefevere, on every level of the translation process, it can be shown that, if linguistic considerations enter into conflict with consideration of ideological and/or poetological nature, the latter tend to win out (Lefevere, 2004, p.39). And it is obvious that the translation of *Charlotte's Web* by Kang Xin and Ren Rongrong are applied different translation methods and strategies

¹ - (2016). *The world book encyclopedia* (p.76). Chicago: World Book Inc.

in some non-native things, which may manifest that different social ideologies manipulate the translator's personal ideologies. Therefore, it will make a comparative study of the two Chinese versions of *Charlotte's Web* by Ren Rongrong's and Kang Xin respectively from the perspective of ideology and induce specific translation methods from the linguistic level and the culture.

2. CASE STUDY

A translated version of one literature may be to pass on a comprehension of the original text to target language readers in their own language, even more to meet the current needs of cross-culture communication between countries, which indicates that the translation could be embedded in the prevailing ideology in society. Lefevere classifies two types of ideology: the social ideology and the individual ideology. The former one is a prevailing belief, the most important of which is politics that can even guide the process of translation, while the later one is translator's ideology that is his personal experience and aesthetic. When the social ideology is superior to the individual one, especially when politics is prevailing in social ideology, translator has to abandon his preference and to translate a suitable target text for the authority. Likewise, there will be an opposite condition when the individual ideology is superior to the social ideology.

2.1 Ideology's Influence on the Choice of the Original Text

The most remarkable achievement of the discussion on the educational nature of CL from the late 1970s to the early 1980s is to liberate gradually children's literature from the narrow political thought and ethical indoctrination towards the diversification of the educational function of children's literature. People's Daily published an editorial entitled "Strive to do a Good Job in the Creation and Publication of Children's Books" on November 18, 1978, which pointed out: "With a set of fallacies about Lin Biao and the Gang of Four as well as the various rules and regulations laid down by them, we must thoroughly criticize the chaos, rectify the root causes, and make a clear distinction to tell right from wrong, so that the creation of children's books could wait for prosperity." The young generation of Children's Literature writers who stood at the turn of the times carried out a more in-depth practical exploration in their creation. After establishing children's subject status, they gradually broke away from the dependence on the mainstream ideological discourse and restored their dominant position in their creation so that they also reestablished the identity of intellectuals as enlighteners. Therefore, from the standpoint of enlightenment, the writers of children's literature focus on the call of people's subjective consciousness. On the whole, the creation of children's literature from the late

1970s to 1980s is based on historical reflection, but also reflects the spirit of the times in the new historical period, which indicates a tendency of "cultivating people", including the lofty expectation of leading children's growth with the spirit of the times and national ideals. The friendship and the beauty of life in *Charlotte's Web* is actually one of the spiritual pursuits of children's literature at that era, so Kang Xin chose it to translate to meet the social and ideological needs and then help children expand their imagination.

Internet media has entered into China for only a few decades, but it is quietly changing people's way of life with its rapid development, and the interaction between Internet media and literature is becoming more and more frequent. As a new literary medium, network media has brought the communication and development to children's literature. The arrival of mass media has brought extensive and profound alteration to people's aesthetic psychology. And the development of video media makes contemporary children's aesthetic pursuit more sensitive, which urges them to be more inclined to accept intuitive images and rely more on images or graphic text expression in reading rather than receive the deep reading of pure text. In this way, in order to meet the needs of children's shallow reading, the creation of children's literature is bound towards the direction of entertainment and popularization. In the process of deep interaction between literature and the media, the openness and participation of literary activities brought about by the media connect writers' creation with readers' acceptance more closely. Thus, in the creation of children's literature, the aesthetic experience and aesthetic value of children's readers will be more involved in the construction of the text object. The aesthetic sensibility of the readers refreshes the translated classic children's literature to the face of the translator, and the already transformed social ideology makes concession to the translator personal ideology. Therefore, compared with Kang Xin's translation, Ren Rongrong's version adopts completely different translation strategies to refine the translation.

2.2 Ideology's Manipulation on the Translation Language Style

Easily attracted by concrete images, children incline to be interested in more visualized expressions, which leads the translator to adjust more visible and specific language style to reproduce the function of original text. "Language, a core of culture, is bound to reflect the characteristics of the times and society and serve the social development, which witnesses the ensemble of language and ideology" (Maria, 2014, p.5). In the following, the example of modal particle, oral language and written language, old words and new words adopted by Kang Xin and Ren Rongrong will be presented for the comparison and contrast of the two translators' linguistically adaptive selection.

Example 1:

The original: “No, the trough is dry, and I want you to go to sleep. No more talking! Close your eyes and go to sleep!” (White, 2010, p.62)

The translation:

- a. “没那回事，食槽是干的，而且我要你睡觉，不要再讲话！闭上眼睛，睡觉去！” (Kang, 1979, p.62)
 b. “不，食槽是干的，我要你睡觉。别说话了！闭上你的眼睛，好好睡觉吧！” (Ren, 2011, p.69)

Example 2:

The original: “I never do those things if I can avoid them,” replied the rat sourly, “I prefer to spend my time eating, gnawing, spying and hiding.” (White, 2010, p.29)

The translation:

- a. “要是能够避免，我绝对不做这种傻事，”老鼠没好气地说，“我情愿把时间花在吃、咬、巡逻、躲藏上。” (Kang, 1979, p.26)
 b. “这种事我从来能不干就不干，”老鼠尖利地回答说，“我情愿把时间花在吃啊，啃啊，窥探啊，躲藏啊这些上头。” (Ren, 2011, p.33)

Analysis: Modal particles, an important feature of Chinese language, function in reflecting the mood or attitude of the narrator. Compared with Kang’s version, the modal particle “了” and “吧” of Ren’s version in the first example at the end of sentence tactfully reproduce a soft and warm tone and the feature of the children’s spoken language. Because the addition of the modal particle can superior to ease Wilbur’s anxiety and despair when Wilbur is worried about being killed for ham in a few months and begs Charlotte, his only good friend on the farm, to save him. Likewise, the addition of the interjection “啊” simulate the English word um, uh, well and so on that are naturally used to fill in the pause in an important speech or article, which both assist their versions to adapt to children’s habitual way of speaking, because the individual ideology help translator to reproduce a more colloquial life scene to accord with young readers’ speaking and reading style.

Example 3:

The original: First she kissed her father, then she kissed her mother. Then she opened the lid again, lifted the pig out, and held it against her cheek. (White, 2010, p.4)

The translation:

- a. 她先吻了父亲，又吻了母亲，然后把盒盖打开，抱起小猪贴在颊上。(Kang, 1979, p.4)
 b. 她先亲亲爸爸，再亲亲妈妈，然后她又打开箱盖，把小猪抱出来，贴在脸蛋上。(Ren, 2011, p.4)

Example 4:

The original: It was still only about four o’clock but Wilbur was ready for sleep. (White, 2010, p.24)

The translation:

- a. 只四点钟，但威伯准备就寝。(Kang, 1979, p.22)
 b. 才不过四点钟左右，可威尔伯已经要睡了。(Ren, 2011, p.35)

Analysis: The source text of the Example 3 is a sense about Fern’s pleasure after successfully keeping Wilbur, the little pig, around her. Fern kissed them to express her gratitude for her parents. Thus, it’s more preferable to say these colloquial and informal words “爸爸” and “妈妈” than these formal words “父亲” and “母亲” at this sentence because the behavior of “kiss” is a common and friendly manner of daily communication in the western country. Furthermore, the written word “颊” is not familiar among most of young readers who actually use the word “脸蛋” in their daily expression. Meanwhile, the word “安寝” of the Example 4 is beyond the receptivity of those children who have never read relevant historical articles because the word is often used in the ancient Chinese articles. Since the Economic System Reform in 1992, the center of Chinese life has gradually shifted from the class struggle to economic and cultural construction, which has a remarkable impact on the current domestic ideology that emphasizes children’s psychological development and turns to the value of child-orientation. Therefore, Ren took these colloquial words to create a closer room with children from their individual ideology, while Kang’s version may be odd and even opaque for children to have a deep look.

“Material culture mainly involves terms of food, clothes, house and towns, transport and many other things” (Newmark, 2001, p.95). All of these are firmly relative to children’s life. Translations of these cultural factors are worth discussing. *Charlotte’s Web* is a classic and refined fable portraying descriptions of food and many daily utensils.

Example 5:

Food (P24-25)	Kang’s version (P23-24)	Ren’s version (P177-178)
Molasses	糖浆	蜂蜜
Toasted corn flake	玉米片	凯洛牌爆米花
Custard pudding with raisins	带葡萄干的蛋糕	葡萄干蛋奶布丁
Shredded wheat	麸皮	脆麦片条
Sandwich	夹馅面包	三明治

Example 6:

Cars (P73)	Kang’s version (P79)	Ren’s version (P223)
Plymouths	普立末司牌	普利茅斯汽车
Studebakers	司徒贝克牌	史蒂倍克汽车
Pontiacs	旁提艾克牌	庞蒂亚克汽车

Analysis: In Newmark’s words, “Food is for many the most sensitive and important expression of national culture” (Newmark, 2001, p.97). In *Charlotte’s Web*, the food is mentioned a lot, because the food of the pig is described. Pig’s food is the leftovers of people, so it reflects food culture of westerners. The first table is about the pig’s three meals. There are some that are extremely familiar to westerners but may mean nothing to Chinese, such as “pudding” and “sandwich”. They didn’t make sense for most Chinese in the 1980s, while they’re popular and appreciated by Chinese children nowadays.

To be honest, when translator is dealing with those exotic matters, transliteration is adopted for those young readers in the 1980s at the second graph, such as Plymouths. Therefore, translators who live in different social backgrounds must be influenced inevitably by social ideology, which produces different translated versions.

2.3 Ideology's Cultural Influence on the Adoption of Translation Strategy

Translation doesn't mean just the transfer of the meaning from one language to another, but rather an area in which culture meet. Just as Lefevere holds that "translation are not made in a vacuum. Translators function in a given culture at a given time." (Lefevere, 1992, p.14) In the long period of creating literature, Chinese children were not thought of as independent individuals. This bias resulted in the shortage of relevant literature, which causes the ignorance of their unique characteristics. Therefore, the CLT in China keeps a considerable room for translator to make an exploration with the establishment of children-orientation in the 1980s. Kang Xin believes that she translated this book just for introducing it to China and she still didn't treat the children as the main reader group at that time from the preface of the book. Nowadays, the whole social ideology gradually focuses on children characteristics with the reinforcement of children-orientation, which leads Ren Rongrong to pay attention to the vibrancy and gaiety of language for recreating the cultural fascination of original text.

Example 7:

The original: I promise. I cross my heart. (White, 2010, p.144)

The translation:

- a. 当真，我发誓。(Kang, 1979, p.156)
- b. 我保证，我在心口划十字。(Ren, 2011, p.289)

Example 8:

The original: From across the road a bird sang "Whippoorwill, whippoorwill!" (White, 2010, p.57)

The translation:

- a. 在大路的那面，一只鸟在唱：“回铺未？回铺未？”(Kang, 1979, p.59)
- b. 大路对面，一只小鸟在唱：“唧唧喳！唧唧喳！”(Ren, 2011, p.66)

Analysis: The gesture of "I cross my heart" involves Christian religious culture in the seventh example, which makes others believe that you are telling the truth. When dealing with the strange culture-loaded words, Kang used the traditional Chinese colloquialism "发誓" to convey the same meaning of this gesture with domestication while Ren translated literally the gesture with foreignization. The culture-loaded word of the eighth example also witnesses the applications of different translation strategies. A whippoorwill is a North American bird that is active at night and has a call that sounds like "whip poor will". Kang transliterated it into "回铺未" that is obviously the awkward combination of the

three words and Ren shifted the sound into "唧唧喳" to skip the difficulty in understanding and fill the blanks in the meaning by using free translation. These different translation strategies indicate that personal ideology may be manipulated by social ideology consisting of the variation of the readers' aesthetic capacities at different period to some extent.

Example 9:

The original: And now, Fern, it's time to get ready for Sunday School and tell Avery to get ready. (White, 2010, p.47)

The translation:

- a. 芬，主日学校的时间快到了，去告诉阿汶准备好。(Kang, 1979, p.51)
- b. 不过现在，弗恩，该上主日学校了。叫艾弗里准备好。注释：主日学校是星期日对儿童进行宗教教育的学校，大多附设在教堂里。(Ren, 2011, p.200)

Analysis: However, doing with the specific address "Sunday School" that is a kind of school in church for many different types of religious education pursued on Sundays by various Christian denomination in western country, both translators applied foreignization to keep the original meaning and exoticism. Nevertheless, the addition of note apparently results in that Ren's version take the children's understanding into consideration better than Kang's one, because Ren firstly thinks over the possible difficulties children may encounter and removes away the obstacles that hinder children to understand. Therefore, the addition is absolutely the signature of the manipulation of personal ideology.

CONCLUSION

This paper has comparatively researched *Charlotte's Web* from a new angle, Ideology, and has demonstrated the manipulation of Ideology from three levels, including choice of original text, language style and culture-loaded words. And Kang's version is inferior to Ren's one, because the latter translator takes fully into account the particularity of children's literature and the different cultural system of young readers from the Ideology. It is actually proved that the manipulation of different social Ideology actually influences the translator personal ideology in these above examples, which even could manipulate the application of different translation strategies. Ideology offers a new theoretical method to do the relevant translation research, which could encourage that more and more attention should be paid to the improvement of translation of children's literature.

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