

A Study of the English Translation on Treatise on Febrile Diseases from the Perspective of Eco-Translatology

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ABSTRACT. *Based on the theory of eco-translatology, this paper makes a comparative study of some articles in the two English versions of treatises on Treatise on Febrile Diseases. It analyzes the adaptive selection and transformation of its linguistic, cultural and communicative dimensions. Through the core psychological concept of “Translator-centeredness” in ecological translation, this paper divides the two translators’ choice of translation purpose, translation quality and translation strategy in order to provide reference for the translation of Treatise on Febrile Diseases and other traditional Chinese medicine books.*

KEYWORDS: *Treatise on febrile diseases, Three dimensional translation theory, Eco-translatology*

1. Introduction

With the globalization becoming more and more integrated, not only close economic exchanges between countries, but also increasingly frequent cultural exchanges, Chinese culture is bound to go out and communicate with other countries’ cultures. If Chinese culture wants to go out, the external communication of Chinese cultural works is very important. Although there are some people in the field of TCM classics research, they mainly focus on the study of *Huangdi Neijing*. With the continuous improvement of China’s international status, Chinese Medicine Classics have gradually opened a window for China to go to the world and the world to understand China.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Eco-Translatology

Hu Gengshen, professor of Tsinghua University, based on the combination of Darwin’s theory of evolution and Chinese ecological wisdom, proposed and constructed the theoretical framework of eco-translatology (Hu Gengsheng, 2008).

Eco-translatology is based on translation adaptive selection theory, and “translation adaptive selection theory” is based on Darwin’s biological evolution theory. It puts forward that translation is adaptation and selection. Translation should be centered on the translator. The best translation is the cumulative result of the translator’s choice adaptation and adaptive selection to the translational environment. The translation process is a cyclic process in which the translator’s adaptation and the translator’s choice are alternately carried out. The focus of the translation method is on the “three-dimensional” transformation, that is, the transformation of adaptive selection at the language dimension, cultural dimension, and communication dimension (Hu Gengsheng, 2006:94).

2.2 The Relationship between Eco-Translatology and the English Translation on Treatise on Febrile Diseases

The theory of eco-translatology is the first systematic and complete translation theory in China. It is a translation research methodology that looks at translation from an ecological perspective. Its theoretical system is similar to the basic theory of traditional Chinese medicine. With the guidance of eco-translatology theory, the internal verve of TCM culture can be more externalized.

The theory of translator-centredness in the theory of eco-translatology requires that the study of the translation of *Treatise on Febrile Diseases* should be changed from the pure language level to the study of the translator’s subjective initiative. The view that translation is adaptation and selection changes the study of the translation of *Treatise on Febrile Diseases* from the static study to the dynamic study, with a three-dimensional study of the influence on the language, culture and communication of the translation English translation. Translational eco-environment makes the study of the translation of *Treatise on Febrile Diseases* more extensive. Ancient Chinese, the original text of *Treatise on Febrile Diseases* and English text can be regarded as an overall system, which is the overall environment for translators and the translation of *Treatise on Febrile Diseases*.

Therefore, the theory of eco-translatology provides a new three-dimensional perspective for the study of the translation of *Treatise on Febrile Diseases*. Instead of simply comparing the original text and the translation of *Treatise on Febrile Diseases*, it focuses more on the causes and influencing factors behind it, and tries to find out the specific ways that the theory of eco-translatology play in the translation of *Treatise on Febrile Diseases*, and summarizes the regular principles for the future translation of *Treatise on Febrile Diseases* and other traditional Chinese medicine books.

3. A Comparative Study of the English Translation on Treatise on Febrile Diseases from the Perspective of Eco-translatology

3.1 The Ecological Environment for the Translation of Treatise on Febrile Diseases

The English version of *Treatise on Febrile Diseases* has been published for more than 30 years since 1980s, with 12 translations. According to the translational eco-environment such as language, communication, culture, society, authors, readers, the English translation of *Treatise on Febrile Diseases* can be roughly divided into three stages, from the abridgement of some original texts, the dissemination of basic knowledge of traditional Chinese medicine to the dissemination of Chinese culture.

The three stages are as follows:

The first stage: 1981-1991. During this period, the standardization of English translation of TCM terms has not yet been established, and the choice of English translation terms and strategies are not the same. As for the title of *Treatise on Febrile Diseases*, there are different versions such as *Shang Han Lun, Exogenous Febrile Disease, Treatise on Febrile Diseases Caused by Cold*. There are four translations of *Treatise on Febrile Diseases*, namely Xu Hongyuan's edition, Luo Xi's edition, Dean C. Epler, JR's edition and couple Paul Lin's edition. During this period, the culture of traditional Chinese medicine was on the edge of the target countries, and even little was known. At this time, the English translation mostly adopted literal translation and reader oriented domestication. The main purpose was to let the target countries understand and understand traditional Chinese medicine and spread the basic knowledge of traditional Chinese medicine. Due to the limitation of the translation level at that time, the translation of abridged translation was mostly adopted.

The second stage: 1992-2007. During this period, TCM terminology and the standardization project of and TCM English translation began to achieve preliminary results. There are four translations of *Treatise on Febrile Diseases* in this stage, which are Luo Xiwen's 1993 edition, Luo Xiwen's 2007 edition, Wei Qiujie's edition and Huang Hai's edition. On the basis of literal translation, the translation methods such as free translation, transliteration and interpretation have been added to each translation, and the arrangement method of Chinese-English comparison has been adopted, mainly adopting the strategy of dissimilation translation guided by the original text, paying attention to the transmission of the original meaning of ancient books, and most of them are full translation, the main purpose of which is to highlight its medical value.

The third stage: 2008 -present. With the establishment of standardization of TCM terminology and TCM English translation, the English translation of *Treatise on Febrile Diseases* is relatively more mature. The English versions at this stage mainly include: Yang Jiede's edition, Liu Guohui's edition, Luo Xiwen's 2016 edition and Li Zhao's edition. During this period, clinical application-oriented translation strategy was mainly adopted, and with the improvement of translation level, the translation began to attach importance to the interpretation of traditional Chinese medicine culture and connotation on the basis of spreading basic knowledge of traditional Chinese medicine and medical information of ancient books (Zhang Guoli,Chai Kefu, 2017).

From 1981 to now, there are seven English versions of *Treatise on Febrile Diseases*, and only four of them are cover-to-cover translation. This paper selects the

Luo Xiwen's and Huang Hai's edition published in mainland China as the research objects. The reason why choosing the translations of Luo Xiwen and Huang Hai as examples is that the academic background of Luo Xiwen and Huang Hai is very representative among the major translators of TCM nowadays. Luo Xiwen not only has more knowledge of traditional Chinese medicine, but also has good translation skills. Huang Hai was born in the field of traditional Chinese medicine. From bachelor's degree to doctor's degree, his systematic study of traditional Chinese medicine made him grasp the connotation of traditional Chinese medicine better in translation. However, he hardly experienced the training of formal English translation. Their academic background determines that they adopt different methods to translate *Treatise on Febrile Diseases* and produce different effects.

3.2 The Three-Dimension Adaptation and Selection of Treatise on Febrile Diseases

There are 398 articles in *Treatise on Febrile Diseases*. This paper chooses some articles to explain from the perspective of three-dimensional transformation and the perspective of language, culture and communication dimension.

3.2.1 The Adaptation and Selection of Language Dimension

Treatise on Febrile Diseases has the common characteristics of Chinese medicine language, that is, literariness, humanity, abstraction and fuzziness. This is reflected in the extensive use of rhetoric techniques commonly used in literature, such as metaphor, metonymy, intertextuality, and antithesis and so on, which reflects the literariness of Chinese medicine language. The *Treatise on Febrile Diseases* not only has the common characteristics of the Chinese medicine language, but also has its own characteristics. Chen Yiren, a famous typhoid expert, summed up the five characteristics of typhoid fever theory in seeking truth: "change", "differentiation", "strict", "living" and "simple". Among them, "simple" refers to *Treatise on Febrile Diseases* with fewer words, concise and comprehensive, and strong generality. These linguistic features of *Treatise on Febrile Diseases* require translators to make certain choices in translation, which is convenient for readers to understand and for the external dissemination of *Treatise on Febrile Diseases*.

Example 1: Luo Xiwen's edition: The Initial Yang syndrome with symptoms and sign of fever, perspiration, chill and moderate pulse is termed febrile disease caused by Wind.

Huang Hai's edition: Taiyang disease with symptoms and perspiration, sign of fever, perspiration, aversion to wind, and moderate pulse is termed zhong-feng syndrome.

The translation methods of "Zhong Feng" here are different between the two translators. Luo Xiwen interpreted it by means of free translation. He translated it into "febrile disease caused by wind", while Huang Hai translated it

into “zhong-feng syndrome” by means of Pinyin. From the perspective of eco-translatology, we need to take into account the changes of ancient and modern meanings when translating ancient texts. For example, “Zhong Feng” in western medicine mainly refers to the diseases with sudden fainting, unconsciousness, language disadvantage and hemiplegia as the main clinical symptoms. And “Zhong Feng” here is the name of TCM syndrome, which refers to a kind of exterior syndrome caused by exogenous wind evil, which is different from the stroke of internal injury and miscellaneous diseases. Therefore, the translation of Luo Xiwen here has made an adaptive transformation to the changes of ancient and modern languages, so that readers can well understand the meaning of “Zhong Feng” here and the difference between it and today's “Zhong Feng”. While, the literal translation of Huang Hai does not reflect the adaptive transformation and readers cannot infer the causes and symptoms from the disease name.

Example 2 :

Luo Xiwen's edition: Initial Yang syndrome: If the patient feels stiff in the back and neck, perspires and fears wind, prescribe Decoction of Ramulus Cinnamomi adding Radix Puerariae.

Huang Hai's edition: Taiyang disease, which includes stiffness in neck and back, perspiration and aversion to wind, can be effectively treated by Cinnamon twig decoction with Pueraria.

“Jiji” describes that the back of the neck is tight and uncomfortable, which is unfavorable for turning and pitching. “Jiji”, the dialect in Nanyang area, has the restraint tight, the solid contraction idea. Both Luo Xiwen and Huang Hai choose not to translate “Jiji” here, reflecting the adaptive selection of the text. Although translation requires faithfulness to the original text, faithfulness does not mean dead translation. Not translating “Jiji” does not affect the understanding of the article, but makes the content of the article more concise and rigorous.

3.2.2 The Adaptation and Selection of Cultural Dimension

When translating, we should grasp the balance between nation and world. The cultural information represents and embodies a specific language system and has distinctive national characteristics. Therefore, only translation can the traditional Chinese medicine goes to the world. When translating such classical Chinese medicine as *Treatise on Febrile Diseases*, we should not only consider the language, but also take cultural factors into account. Because the theoretical system of traditional Chinese medicine is based on ancient Chinese philosophy, and traditional Chinese medicine is not only a medicine but also an important part of Chinese culture. Therefore, translators should also pay attention to culture when translating, and pay more attention to the transmission of bilingual cultural connotation.

Example 1: Luo Xiwen's edition: The initial Yang syndrome with or without fever, but with chill and pain in the body, nausea, vomiting and pulse tense both in Yin and Yang, is termed febrile disease caused by Cold.

Huang Hai's edition: Taiyang disease with fever or without fever, and with aversion to cold, pain in the body, nausea, vomiting and tense pulse is termed shanghan syndrome.

Nowadays, the translation of "Yin Yang" is generally based on Pinyin. But the "Yin Yang" in this article refers to part of body, namely, three places at the wrist where the pulse is usually taken. "Yin Yang" refers to three veins are tight. Huang Hai's translation ignores this cultural image and directly translates it into "tense pulse", while Luo Xiwen's translation takes note of this cultural image and translates it into "pulse tense both in Yin and Yang". Here, Luo Xiwen made some adaptation and selection.

Example 2: Luo Xiwen's edition: Febrile disease caused by Cold: Pulse at Yang is hesitant and tight at Yin. According to the pulse, there should be an acute pain in the abdomen. Decoction of Lesser Radix Bupleuri will be curative.

Huang Hai's edition: Febrile disease's pulse at yang is hesitant and tight at yin. According to the pulse, there should be an acute pain in the abdomen. Small jianzhong decoction suits the case. If it is not efficacious, small Bupleunun decoction will be a curative.

3.3 Pulse At Yang is Similar to Pulse Felt Lightly. Pulse At Yin is Similar to Pulse Felt Deeply.

Both translators translate it literally according to the word meaning. Although the literal meaning is translated, the specific meaning of "Yin Yang" here is not explained in detail, which is easy to mislead the readers, so Huang Hai added the specific meaning of "Yin Yang" here with the method of annotation: "Pulse at yang is similar to pulse felt lightly. Pulse at yin is similar to pulse felt deeply". From a cultural perspective, the translation of Huang Hai makes a deeper adaptive selection for the translation of the cultural image of "Yin Yang". The literal translation of "pulse at Yang and at Yin" retains the original appearance of the cultural image of "Yin Yang", which is conducive to the external communication of this strange cultural image and promotes the acceptance of this cultural image by foreign readers. At the same time, the specific meaning of "Yin Yang" here is further explained by means of annotation, which enriches the connotation of this cultural image.

Example 3:

Luo Xiwen's edition: The cause of the Greater Yang syndrome is Stomach Excess.

Huang Hai's edition: Yangming disease is stomach excess.

NOTES:

3.4 Stomach Here Indicates the Stomach Channel of Food Yangming, and Large Intestine Channel of Hand Yangming. Excess, Here Means the,

Predominance of Excessive Pathogenic Factors.

“Weijia” refers to stomach and large intestine. “shi” refers to the flourishing of evil spirits. “Weijiashi” is Zhang Zhongjing’s highly generalization of Yangming disease heat syndrome and positive pathological mechanism. According to the literal meaning, both Luo Xiwen and Huang Hai translate “Weijiashi” into “stomach excess”. And “excess” means a large amount of something that is allowed or needed in *Longman Contemporary Advanced Dictionary*. Therefore, “excess” can only translate the state of fullness, but it does not express the fullness of “Xieqi”. In the same way, the translation of “stomach” is not complete, which omits the large intestine in the stomach. In view of the above problems, Huang Hai adopted the method of annotation to add further explanation of “Weijia” and “shi”, and made the translation transformation of cultural dimension.

3.4.1 The Adaptation and Selection of Communicative Dimension

The communicative function of *Treatise on Febrile Diseases* is different from that of general literary works, not for the aesthetic enjoyment of literary beauty, but mainly for guiding clinical practice. Therefore, the translation of *Treatise on Febrile Diseases* should fully reflect the communicative function of guiding clinical practice. This requires accurate, detailed and rigorous translation. Therefore, in translation, the translator should add and interpret the omitted part of the original text of *Treatise on Febrile Diseases* so as to make the translation accurate, detailed and precise. Only in this way can the clinical communicative function of *Treatise on Febrile Diseases* be better realized.

Example 1: Luo Xiwen’s edition: Initial Yang syndrome, three days: The syndrome is not gone after the adoption of diaphoresis. When the patient has a fever with damp heat, it indicates that the syndrome has transmitted into the Stomach Channel of Greater Yang. Decoction of Tiaowei Chengqi is the curative.

Huang Hai’s edition: Taiyang disease for three days, the syndrome is not gone after the adoption of diaphoresis. When the patient has a fever with perspiration, it indicates that the syndrome has transmitted into yangming channel. Tiaowei chengqi decoction is the curative.

As a classic work of traditional Chinese medicine, *Treatise on Febrile Diseases* has not only the communicative purpose of making readers understand, but also the communicative function of guiding clinical practice as a reference book, so the translation of symptom details is particularly important for guiding clinical practice. This paragraph refers to the use of “Zhengzheng Fare” to describe the heating from the inside to the outside, such as the steaming of hot air in the steamer, hot and moist, which is the result of internal heat and external steaming. Therefore, the translation of such “Fare” needs to be refined, which is quite different from the sweating of high fever. Therefore, the Huang Hai’s translation of “Zhengzheng Fare” into “a fever with penetration” is too general, without considering the communicative function of the translation of the details of fever. In comparison, Luo Xiwen made some translation supplements to the details, translating them into “a fever with damp

heat”, use “damp heat” to express the meaning of “Zhengzheng”.

Example 2: Luo Xiwen’s edition: When the therapy of warm needle acupuncture is used to induce perspiration, if the locus of the puncture hole is left unprotected and affected by cold, it will turn red and swollen. The sensation of a forcible impulsive movement will come up from the abdomen to the chest, resulting in a Bentun.

Huang Hai’s edition: When the therapy of warm needle acupuncture is used to induce perspiration, the locus of the puncture hole would turn red and swollen after affected by cold. The sensation of gas running from the lower abdomen to chest results in the running-pig syndrome.

Here, the running state of pigs is used to describe the patient’s self-conscious feeling to the chest and pharynx. In translation, the translator should make an adaptive transformation to this phenomenon. In this way, Luo Xiwen translated “Ben Tun” into “Bentun”. Obviously, there was no adaptive transformation to this phenomenon, while Huang Hai made an adaptive transformation, translating “Ben Tun” into “running-pig syndrome”, according to the metaphor of this image, combined with the specific symptom of “Qi flushes the heart from less stomach”, the reader can have a deeper understanding of “Ben Tun”.

3.4.2 “Translator-Centeredness” in the Translation of *Treatise on Febrile Diseases*

In this study, we can know that in the process of translation of *Treatise on Febrile Diseases*, the difference between the two versions is the result of the translator’s adaptation. In the theory of eco-translatology, “translator-centeredness” is its core theory. That is to say, translators play an important role in the translation ecosystem. If the translation food is made into a complete ecosystem, the translator first extracts nutrients from the inorganic environment (the original text and the social and cultural environment where and translator live) by photosynthesis (the code conversion between two languages and one word) and synthesizes the organic matter (translation) in order to complete the process of product production. Translators’ activities directly affect the balance and sustainable development of the whole ecosystem. The behavior pattern of a system is sometimes related to its position in the whole ecosystem.

4. Conclusion

Based on the theory of eco-translatology, this paper analyzes some articles in Luo Xiwen’s and Huang Hai’s English versions of *Treatise on Febrile Diseases*. It is found that the choice of different translation methods and strategies depends on the translation purpose of the translator. Translation should be centered on the translator and we can seek common ground while reserving differences in diversity. According to the theory of “translator-centeredness” in the theory of eco-translatology, the diversity of the translation of two traditional Chinese medicine names and proper

nouns in *Treatise on Febrile Diseases* depends on the translator's translation purpose and the translator's own translation quality. Because of this, different translators will adopt different translation methods and strategies.

According to the theory of eco-translatology, the translation of *Treatise on Febrile Diseases* should be adapted from three-dimension: language, culture and communication. The author hopes that more translation examples can be selected for future research and that from the perspective of specific translation methods, through the collection of a large number of data, the optimal combination rules of translation methods of all parts of *Treatise on Febrile Diseases* can be analyzed and mined.

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