

Hearing Translator's Voice in Political Fables: A Corpus-based Study of the Chinese Translations of *Animal Farm*

Luo Lin

Hong Kong Baptist University, Hong Kong, 000977, China

Abstract: This article sets out to investigate the voices of three renowned and influential translators – Rong Rude, Sun Zhongxu, and Lau Shiu-ming – in their Chinese translations of the political fable *Animal Farm* from the perspective of typical four-character Chinese idioms (*chengyu* and *sizige*) by means of the corpus-based approach. With Aixela's classification of translation method and strategy for culture-specific items, and the assistance of self-built parallel corpus model in Sketch Engine, a quantitative analysis is adopted. According to the identification and statistics of the annotated translation approaches and strategies for all *chengyu* and *sizige* used by the translators in the three Chinese versions, it can be found that the translators' voices can be perceived in their works from their applications of such kind of culture-specific terms. Afterwards, the author qualitatively analyzes the three translators' motivations of reflecting their voices on the basis to reader reception theory. This corpus-based study of translator's voice is in the hope of providing theoretical reference for the two fields of translation studies and *Animal Farm*.

Keywords: Corpus-based Study of Literary Translation; Translator's Voice; Translation Approach and Strategy; Typical Four-character Chinese Idioms

1. Introduction

With the development of corpus linguistics, there are a growing number of researchers in the academia of translation studies employ this analysis tools into their investigation. In other words, the application of corpus model has been widely existed in the field of translation studies, which, on the hand, promote the birth of corpus-based translation studies as well. The self-compilation of corpus is widely applied in various aspects of translation studies, such as literary translation, translation technology, interpreting, etc. More specifically speaking, corpus models used in literary translation domain are not only for the purpose of exploring the universals existing in the target texts, but also for sake of uncovering the features of the elements in the translations, such as metaphors, images, characterizations, etc. mainly by the identification and statistics of specific linguistic parameters data. Furthermore, the discovery of translator's subjectivity is also included into this research aspect, which involved with translator's style, translator's creativity, translator's views, translator's approaches and strategies, etc. (Hu & Li 2021)^[1]

The author of the selected novel for this study is George Orwell, one of the greatest and the most influential modern political critics, essayists, as well as novelists not only in the U.K., but also in the world. It is highly presumable that due to his vagabond life and the tough experiences around the world during the childhood^[2], Orwell experienced the dark sides of poetry and unfairness in the so-called civilized human society, and realized the rue face – hypocrisy, absurdity and degeneracy – of the contemporary social system and the ruling class – the government and politicians. From his point of the ridiculousness and suffering from people in the current society is mainly caused by the disadvantages existing in the system and further corruption and encroachment from the voracious politicians. On the basis of the accurate and sharp cognition to the sick world, the political publications, including fictions, essays and editorials, by Orwell came out to the public. The main theme he to express is the satire and critique of the contradictions in socialism, in order to a warning to future generations to avoid the instability and even collapse of human civilization. Among his works, it can be said that the literatures, especially novels, should be Orwell's most influential and renowned classics to the readers. The two most famous works of fiction are *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as well as *Animal Farm*. According to the story about a couple of animals in their farm, Orwell sharply satires the corresponding political leaders in the Soviet Union in that era, and simultaneously critics the rigid Stalinist system

