

A Tentative Study of Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry from the Perspective of Eco-Translatology

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ABSTRACT. *Eco-Translatology is a new interdisciplinary translation theory proposed by Professor Hu Gengshen. This theory claims that translation is the translator's multidimensional adaptation and selection to the translation environment. After 20 years of development, the theory is of great guiding significance to translation practice. This paper aims at studying William Butler Yeats's Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry from the Eco-Translatology, which focusing on the translation strategies from linguistic dimension, cultural dimension and communicative dimension. In linguistic transformation, the strategies of addition, conversion and specification are given. In cultural transformation, the author keeps the cultural images. In communicative transformation, this paper discusses how to retaining the rhyme and rhythm. This paper shows that Eco-Translatology plays an important role in translation and translators should focus on adaptive selection in linguistic, cultural and communicative dimension. The author hopes this study could help the cultural exchange between China and the West.*

KEYWORDS: *Eco-translatology, Three-dimensional transformation, Fairy and folk tales of the irish peasantry*

1. Introduction

In the 21st century, the upsurge of ecological theory has shown a global trend, and the concept of “ecology” has been gradually implanted in various fields. There are more and more studies on translation from the perspectives of “ecology” “environment” “adaptation” and “selection”. In essence, translation is not only a process of cross-language and cross-culture communication, but also a process of adaptation and selection. Hu Gengshen introduces the theory of “adaptation / selection” in Darwinian biological evolution into translation research, and defines translation as “taking the translator as the leader, the text as the support, and the cross-cultural information transformation as the purpose. Translation is the selective activity for the translator to adapt to the translation ecology and transplant the text”[1].

In literary translation, the translator should try to keep the same style as the source text. The translator should try to be faithful to the original text and be able to translate with the translator’s own in translating literary works [2]. In the process of text translation, “multidimensional transformation” is usually manifested in changing the single dimension translation processing after considering the whole sentence, paragraph and the text; then the translator not only makes language reformulation, but also observing the cultural connotation, communicative intention, psychological implication, aesthetic pursuit and other dimensions, especially focusing on the ecological balance between the source language and the target language, as well as the large, medium and small translational eco-environment and other integral or interrelated elements. First of all, the translator should try to maintain the style of the original text, express the translation as accurately as possible, and realize the aesthetic recreation of the translation on the basis of linguistic dimension, respecting the original text and clarifying the original intention and relevant cultural background. On the premise of faithfulness to the original text, full understanding of the source culture and the target culture, and from the perspective of cultural dimension, the translator should accurately express various elves and names of people and places in Ireland according to cultural differences; and the description of the natural environment should also reproduce the exotic charm. Finally, the translator should focus on the transformation on the level of communication from the perspective of communicative dimension in addition to the transformation of language information and the transmission of cultural connotation, not only paying attention to whether the author's overall communicative intention in the original language system is reflected in the target language system, but also attaching importance to whether the communicative intention of cultural connotation is transmitted to the readers.

2. Eco-Translatology

Translation, as a human cross-culture communicative activity, which is not only a language transformation, nor a translator's personal activity. To a large extent, it is limited by a variety of external and internal factors, such as history, culture, politics, aesthetic taste, etc^[3].

Based on adaptation/selection, Eco-Translatology mainly studies translation ecology (translational environment), text ecology (the text) and communicative ecology (the translator). The Eco-Translatology is mainly embodied in the principle of “three-dimensional transformation”, that is, “multidimensional adaptation and adaptive selection”, which focusing on the adaptation of language, culture and communication. From the perspective of functional linguistics, the linguistic dimension focuses on the text language expression of translation, the cultural dimension focuses on the contextual effect of translation, and the communicative dimension focuses on the interpersonal intention of translation. From a practical point of view, language, culture and communication have always been widely accepted in the field of translation, and they are the perspective that needs to be focused on in the process of translation; translators also tend to make adaptive selection and transformation according to different stages or orders of language, culture and communication. From the logical point of view, translation is the transformation of language, language is the carrier of culture, and culture is the accumulation of communication. Therefore, language, culture and communication have internal and logical relations. From the point of view of maintaining the “text ecology”, the translator, through “selective adaptation” and “adaptive selection”, should be responsible for maintaining and transforming the language ecology, cultural ecology and communicative ecology of the original text as much as possible which could “survive” in the translational eco-environment of the target language.

In brief, language, culture, communication and other factors are often intertwined, interconnected and interactive in the specific translation process. The author tries to select words carefully and keep the style of the original text in the aspect of linguistic dimension; overcoming the obstacles caused by cultural differences and striving to keep the balance and harmony of the cultural ecology of the two languages so as to ensure the smooth realization of information exchange in cultural dimension; pursuing the best maintenance of the communicative ecology of the original text and the translation in communicative dimension.

3. William Butler Yeats and Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry

3.1 William Butler Yeats

William Butler Yeats (June 13, 1865-January 28, 1939), Irish poet, playwright and essayist, famous mystics, is the leader of the Irish Renaissance Movement and one of the founders of Abbey Theatre. Influenced by Romanticism, aestheticism, mysticism, symbolism and metaphysics, Yeats' poems have evolved his unique styles. Yeats' art represents the epitome of the transition from traditional to modern English poetry. Yeats's early creation has a romantic style and is good at creating a dreamlike atmosphere. His prose collection *The Celtic Twilight* published in 1893. However, Yeats's writing style has undergone a more drastic change and is more close to modern philosophy after entering old ages, under the influence of the modernist poet Ezra Pound, especially under the influence of his own personal experience in the Irish nationalist political movements.

3.2 Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry

Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry is a collection of folktales published by Yeats when he was 23 years old in 1888. There are masterpieces and famous poems spread through the ages in the book that Yeats collected and collated in Ireland. Yeats also make a series of classification: the trooping fairies, the solitary fairies, banshee, ghosts, witches, fairy doctors, saints, priests, the devil, giants, kings, queens, princesses, earls and robbers^[4]. The language of the book is simple and plain, but it is full of local cultural colors. This book plays an indelible role in our understanding of the Irish folkways and the spiritual world of the lower people.

4. Adaptive Selection in the Translation

4.1 Linguistic Dimension Transformation

The linguistic dimension transformation is the translator's adaptive transformation of language form in the process of translation, which is carried out in different aspects and at different levels, usually focusing on textual verbal expressions[1]. Most of the Irish folk tales are created and passed down by ordinary Irish peasantry through their labors, expressing their expectations for a better life and reflecting their vivid and rich imagination.

Therefore, the language style of the source text tends to be colloquial including a large number of narration and description, changeable syntax, combination of long and short sentences, multiple subject subordinate sentences and compound sentences, rich in detailed description and dialogic description. If the translator does not understand the differences between the two languages, it will make it difficult for the target language readers to understand. Therefore, the translator should not only consider the differences between English and Chinese language structures, but also take into account the aesthetic requirements and reading expectations of Chinese readers. Due to the asymmetry of the two languages, translation can be achieved by means of adjusting word order, separation and perspective transformation.

Susan Bassnett claims that the translation of idioms take us a stage further in considering the question of meaning and translation^[5]. First of all, the source text contains a large number of Irish dialect vocabulary. Although there is little difference between Irish English and standard English in terms of vocabulary, the usage of Irish English vocabulary is relatively free and casual. This is certainly related to Irish long-standing cultural features, for example, “an”, “ud” “o” which means “and”, “would”, “of” in Ireland, which means. Some words in modern English use another way of expression in Irish dialect, for example, jist=just, fau't=fault, raison=reason, dhry=dry, dhrop=drop, wid=with, remimber=remember, thrubble=trouble, wor=were, yer=your, wanst=once, iv=of, be kase=because, beyant=beyond, waather=water, briscadh=“breaking” and so on^[4]. In addition to the subtle differences between Irish dialect and standard English, there are also great differences between English and Chinese. The two languages show the social, cultural, geographical and historical differences. Besides, there are also spells used by Western elves and goblins in the individual stories of the original text. Some of these incantations originated from the ancient Gaelic language, while others could not be verified. When dealing with this kind of vocabulary, the author carefully checks, combines the aesthetic expectation of Chinese readers, and adopts the method of onomatopoeia to deal with it properly in order to make the version accepted by Chinese readers. The authors adopts the strategies of addition, conversion, transliteration and specification to convey the sense of source text.

4.2 Cultural Dimension Transformation

The cultural dimension transformation is that the translator pays attention to the transmission and interpretation of bilingual cultural connotation in the process of translation[6]. Translators should concern the cultural differences between English and Chinese, and avoid misunderstanding caused by cultural differences through cultural dimension transformation which requires translators to have sufficient cultural knowledge reserve.

Both western traditional folk tales and Chinese traditional stories are generally created by laboring people, which not only embodies the wisdom and good wishes of the working people, but also expresses the rejection and punishment of selfishness, ferocity, ugliness and jealousy. However, the supernatural images of fairies, goblins and spirits in Western myths and folk tales are quite different from those in traditional Chinese stories. Their appearance characteristics and habits are alien. For example, in *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry*, the unique trooping fairies, the solitary fairies, banshee, the witch hare and so on, these unique cultural images will form certain cultural conflicts and cognitive faults in the Chinese context. Therefore, in the process of translation practice, in order to properly handle the differences and conflicts between Chinese and Western culture, the author needs supplement relevant notes, and strive to close the distance between Chinese readers and the source text.

In the process of translation, *sheehogue* [sidheóg] or *deenee shee* [daoine sidhe] means fairy people[7]. Lagnanay, Donegal, Knockgrifton, Kildare, Queen's County, Hy-Brasail, Coloony, Knockmany, all of these refer to Irish places, among which, there often follows the fairy tales in Donegal and Queen's County. What's more, there are also many kinds of fairies and odd cultural images, such as the witch hare, the fairy nurse, the soul cages, bewitched butter, the demon cat and so on. Eugene A. Nida indicates that bilingual competence has almost always been regarded as essential requirement for translators[8]. So the author checks one by one and adds annotations or explain them in the book while translating from perspective of cultural dimension.

4.3 The Communicative Dimension Transformation

The communicative dimension transformation is that the translator pays attention to the adaptation of bilingual communicative intention in the process of translation. When translating, the translator should make clear what the communicative intention of the original text is, and convey it to the reader accurately[5].

In *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry*, figures of speech mainly includes personification, simile, metonymy, parallelism, repetition, irony, etc. In the process of translation practice, the author try her best to convey the cultural characteristics of the source language, such as retaining the rhetorical effect of the source language. When the cultural characteristics of the original text can not be directly conveyed, the translator only needs to clearly transform the semantics of the source language. On the basis of faithfulness, the translator should give full play to the advantages of Chinese language features, using four-character structure and make the translation readable.

There are some poems such as *The Fairies*, *The Fairy Well of Lagnanay*, *Cusheen Loo*, *The Fairy Thorn*, *A Lamentation for the Death of Sir Maurice Fitzgerald*, *A Dream*, *A Legend of Tyrone*, *Hy-Brasail*. *-The Isle of the Blest*. The author pays great attention to rhyme, form and beauty. During translating *A Dream*, the author chooses the five-syllable traditional form to convey the meaning of original poem. In addition to making poems rhyme, the author also retains the emotional keynote, especially in *A Lamentation for the Death of Sir Maurice Fitzgerald*.

5. Conclusion

According to Hu Gengshen, Eco-Translatology has a comprehensive system including target text, translator and translated version, producing a translation work by three-dimensional adaptation and selection. Based on Professor Hu Gengshen's Eco-Translatology, this paper explores the translation of *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry* from the perspective of "three-dimensional transformation", using translation strategies such as addition, conversion, transliteration, retaining rhythm and so on. In the linguistic dimension, the author ensures the semantic transmission of original text. In cultural dimension, the translator adds the annotation in the text to explain the culture-loaded words, so as to avoid causing reading obstacles to the readers. In communicative dimension, the author mainly talks about keeping rhythm, adopting five-syllable poem, reproducing style and tries to convey communicative intention. In a word, this paper proves that Eco-Translatology could guide literary translation to reproduce the charm of the original works, promoting the cultural exchange between China and the West, and helping readers to further understand Irish culture.

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