

Study on the Application of Creative Translation in Word and Rhyme in XYC's Translation of Tang Poem

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Abstract: Poem translation required translators to deeply understand both languages and have the ability to capture the essence of the original text, and reproduce it in a way that resonated with the target audience since different cultural background. The application of creative translation of word and rhyme in Xu Yuanchong's Translation of Tang Poem was analyzed in the paper. Some examples were selected to explore the creativity in word translation process including the translation of poetic image words, allusive words and extended feeling words. In order to preserve the aesthetics of Tang poems, four different rhetorical methods in rhyming were applied to enhance the rhyme. With the above cases, it was found that creative translation had good application in poem translation in lexical and aesthetic dimension. After learning, we could apply the skills of creative translation in poem translation process.

Keywords: Creative Translation; Word Translation; Rhyme; Tang Poems

1. Introduction

Firming cultural self-confidence, enhancing cultural self-awareness, and achieving cultural self-reliance have a bearing on the future destiny of the country, the process of national development, and the interests and well-being of people. Deeply intertwined with Chinese culture, Tang poems serve as a testament to the rich cultural tapestry of Chinese literary and artistic traditions. However, dealing with the transmission of interlingual and intercultural information inevitably encounters loss, distortion, or addition of original information. Translating without losing the beauty and cultural significance of the original text is challenging. Some scholars have mentioned that the translator's subjectivity plays a crucial role in the creative translation of poetry. Xia believed

that the translation of poetry involves navigating cultural and aesthetic nuances, which requires the translator to bridge different "realities" and traditions between the source and target languages^[1]. This translation process is inherently creative and invites a creative approach, especially when dealing with texts born out of a creative process^[2]. The translator's unique interpretation of the source text, influenced by their cultural background and personal experiences, shapes the creative rendering of the text in the target language^[3].

From the perspective of creative translation, this paper selected some of the representatives from Xu's translated work *Tang Poems*, hoping that the paper can help readers have a deeper understanding of creative translation by providing new ideas when dealing with words and rhythm of poems.

2. Review of Creative Translation

The concept of "creative translation" was put forward by the French literary sociologist Robert Escarpit. Escarpit believes that poetry translation must be creative because the translator needs to place the poem in a language system completely different from the original one, which gives the work a new look and enables it to carry out new literary communication with a wider range of readers^[4]. This is similar to the Deconstruction Theory promoted by Davis, in which translation is not the imitation and replication of the original text, but the regeneration of the original text^[5]. Similarly, Venuti points out that there is no absolute equivalence between the target text and the original text. Smooth translation weakens language and cultural boundaries and is not conducive to the protection of cultural uniqueness. Therefore, he compared translation to re-creation and held that there is no strict line between creation and translation^[6]. When the translation may lead to a misunderstanding of the original meaning, it is necessary to make some changes in the target language text, that is

to add the translator's creativity^[7]. Regarded as a spontaneous process readily associated with a special individual and a sort of freedom, Creativity is sustained by an individualistic conception of authorship. In this concept, the author can freely express his thoughts and feelings in writing^[8].

Based on these viewpoints, creative translation is a multifaceted process that involves the transformation of a source text into a target text, while preserving its artistic and cultural essence. The heart of this process lies in the translator's subjectivity, which encompasses their individual experiences, perspectives, and creative agency.

3. Creative Translation in Xu's Translation of Tang Poems

The translation of Chinese poetry presents a myriad of challenges, encompassing linguistic intricacies, cultural nuances, and the preservation of aesthetic elements. It delves into the difficulties of retaining the poetic and artistic beauty of classical Chinese poetry while ensuring linguistic fidelity in the target language. In the field of poetry translation, Xu Yuanchong's Translation of 300 Tang Poems is widely accepted as one of the best translations of Tang poetry into English. The creativity in the translation process to achieve faithfulness and beauty of Tang poems will be analyzed in the following section.

3.1 Creative Translation in Lexical Dimension

Tang poetry is known for its vivid imagery and abundant cultural references. Poetic image words, allusive words, and extended sense words are usually key points of translation. To provide a comprehensive translation, it is important to consider the nuances of both the source and target languages, taking into account their cultural and contextual implications.

a) *Poetic image words*. The poetic image word is translated as "yì xiàng cí", which refers to imagery or imagistic representation in literature and art. By using sensory details and vivid descriptions, poets can create powerful and lasting impressions on their readers. This is an example of how Xu grasped the essence of poetic image words and translate them in a creative way.

Original text: rén xián guì huā luò, yè jìng qīng shān kōng.

Translation: I hear osmanthus blooms fall unenjoyed; In still night hills dissolve into the void.

The poem describes the tranquil and beautiful scenery of a spring night in the mountains. The entire poem is centered around the theme of "quietness", and the poet uses imagery such as "rén xián", "guì huā luò", "yè jìng", "qīng shān kōng" to highlight the peaceful and serene atmosphere of the mountain at night. In the translated version, the poetic image words were not of word-for-word fidelity to the original text. Instead, Xu externalized the images to creating the poet's peaceful state of mind. "I hear osmanthus blooms fall" used contrast to rendered the feeling of inner peace and "hills dissolve into the void" used hyperbole to express the extreme quietness of the surrounding. Although the translation is not completely equivalent to the original text in form, the translation increases the connection between these images, which is beneficial for readers to associate more effectively and experience how does the emotions ambiguously conveyed by Wang Wei.

b) *Allusive words*. Allusive words is usually regarded as an equivalent to the Chinese term "diǎn gù cí". The allusive words in Tang poetry served not only as a means of cultural expression but also as a way to convey moral, historical, and philosophical insights, reflecting the depth and complexity of Tang literary artistry. Here is an example how Xu deal with Allusive words in poem translation.

Original text: dōng fēng bú yǔ zhōu láng biàn, tóng què chūn shēn suǒ èr qiáo.

Translation: Had the east wind refused General Zhou a helping hand, His foe'd have locked his fair wife on Northern shore.

The "zhōu láng" and "èr qiáo" mentioned in the poem are allusive words deeply rooted in Chinese culture and history of the "Battle of the Red Cliff". These allusions words have unique meaning to Chinese readers while the target language readers may not fully understand their meanings if literal translated. In order to convey the meaning of the sentence, "zhōu láng" is translated as General Zhou, which implied Zhou Lang's identity. "èr qiáo" is translated as "his wife", which tells readers the relationships between these characters. By adding brief explanation of the cultural or historical context that the allusion refers to, Xu maintained the

core meaning of the original text.

c) *Extended sense words*. “yǐn shē n cí”, translated as “extended sense words”, are words or phrases that have acquired additional meanings beyond their original definitions, often through metaphorical or symbolic usage. Tang poets frequently used extended sense words in their poems to create rich and layered meanings that require a deep understanding of Chinese culture and history to fully appreciate. Here is an example how Xu deal with extended sense words in poem translation.

Original text: qīng míng shí jiē yǔ fēn fēn, lù shàng xíng rén yù duàn hún.

Translation: A drizzling rain falls like tears on the Mourning day; The mourner's heart is going to break on his way.

In this poem, the writer is walking on the road during the Qingming Festival. The wind is constant and the rain never stopped. The “xíng rén” (traveler) here refers to the grave sweepers who are in low spirits. In this poem, it is not appropriate to translate “xíng rén” as “pedestrian” or “passer-by” as usual. “mourner” is more in a resonance with writer's mood and suits the atmosphere in Qingming Festival better. This kind of translation seems to violate the principle of “faithfulness”, but the sad and cold feelings are fully expressed.

3.2 Creative Translation in Aesthetic Dimension

The use of rhyme in classical Tang poetry is deeply intertwined with the aesthetic appreciation and emotional effects of the verses. Rhyme is closely related to the four tones correspond to the level (píng), rising (shǎng), departing or going (qù), and entering or checked (rù). However, English words do not have fixed tones. In order to keep the beauty of rhythm in Tang poems, Xu involved multiple translation strategies to achieve the same sensation as the original text.

a) *Usage of alliteration*. Alliteration is a literary device that reflects repetition in two or more nearby words of initial consonant sounds. The repetition of initial consonant sounds can have a pleasing effect for readers and listeners. In addition, it calls attention to the rhetorical and artistic impact of the words in that alliteration signifies that the alliterative words are linked purposefully and thematically.

Original text: zhū què qiáo biān yě cǎo huā, w

ū yī xiàng kǒu xī yáng xié. jiù shí wáng xiè táng qián yàn, ēi rù xún cháng bǎi xìng jiā.

Translation: Beside the Bridge of Birds rank grassed overgrow; Over the Street of Mansions the setting sun hangs low. Shallows which skimmed by painted eaves in days gone by, Are dipping now in homes where humble people occupy.

From the above quatrain, “beside” “bridge” “birds”, “setting sun”, “shallows” “skimmed”, “homes” “humble” are four pairs of alliterations. They help to build a poetic mood and also strengthened the musical effects of the poem.

b) *Usage of assonance*. Assonance is a literary device in which the repetition of similar vowel sounds takes place in two or more words in proximity to each other within a line of poetry or prose. Assonance functions as a means of creating rhythm through stressing syllables with repetitious vowel sounds. In addition, assonance can regulate the pacing of a poem or line of text. For example, long vowel sounds tend to slow the pace of reading, whereas short vowel sounds tend to quicken a reader's pace.

Original text: zhōng nán yīn líng xiù, jī xuě fú yún duān. lín biǎo míng jì sè, chéng zhōng zēng mù hán.

Translation: How fair the gloomy mountainside! Snow-crowned peaks float above the cloud. The forests bright in sunset dyed, with evening cold the town's over flowed.

The translation showcased several instances of assonance, specifically with the vowels /əʊ/ and /aɪ/. The words “snow”, “float”, “cold” and “over flowed” share the former, while “bright” and “dyed” share the latter. This use of assonance contributes to the overall impact of the magnificent and spectacular scenery depicted in the poem, particularly the snow-covered peak of Zhongnan Mountain.

c) *Usage of consonance*. Consonance is a literary device that refers to the repetition of the same consonant sounds in a line of text. The repetition of consonant sounds can produce a dramatic auditory effect for readers and listeners.

Original text: fán huá shì sǎn zhū xiāng chén, liú shuǐ wú qíng cǎo zì chūn. rì mù dōng fēng yuàn tí niǎo, luò huā yóu sì duò lóu rén.

Translation: Past splendors are dispersed and blend with fragrant dust, Unfeelingly the river runs and grass grows in spring. At dusk in the east wind and flowers will fall just, Like “Green

Pearl” cumbering down and mournful birds will sing.

The stanza employed varied consonance patterns, one of which is comprised of “splendors”, “runs”, “grass” and “grows”. Through the recurrence of the consonant sound /s/, the translation evokes a feeling of whispering and reinforces the context of death and decay as described in the poem. Another set of consonance is used in “pearl”, “fall”, “mournful”, which suggest the sorrow and sadness and conveys a feeling of grief and misfortune.

4 Application

After learning the skills of creative translation, we could apply in poem translation process. Here’s an example of applying multiple devices to achieve the unique aesthetic feeling of original poem under the guidance of creative translation.

Original text: xiàng jiàn shí nán bié yì nán, dōng fēng wú lì bǎi huā cán. chūn cán dào sǐ sī fāng jìn, là jù chéng huī lèi shǐ gān. xiǎo jǐng dàn chóu yún bìn gǎi, yè yín yīng jiào yuè guāng hán. péng shān cǐ qù wú duō lù, qīng niǎo yīn qín wéi tàn kàn.

Translation: It’s difficult to meet and hard to part. The east wind is too weak to revive blossoms dead. The silkworm till its death spins silk from broken heart. The candle turned to ashes with no tears to shed. At dawn she’d be saddened to see mirrored hair gray. At dusk she would feel cold while crooning by moonlight. To the three fairy hills it is not a long way. Would the bluebird oft fly to see her on the height?

The whole poem rhyming in form of AABA. However, the translation changed the end rhyme to ABAB. “difficult to meet”, “hard to part”, “fly” “height” are assonances. “dawn” “dusk”, “wind” “weak”, “saddened to see”, “cold while crooning”, “her on the height” are alliterations. “silkworm” “till”, “ashes” “tears” form consonances. These rhyming devices effectively made up for the loss of aesthetic feeling of level and oblique tone in the process of translating Tang poetry into English. Although it is not consistent with the rhyme rules of Tang poetry, it maintains the aesthetic of the rhyme and also in line with the English poetry in iambic pentameter style.

5 Conclusion

Translation is a cross-cultural communication activity which should convey the overall messages of the original text, including its cultural, social and historical significance, in a way that is familiar and meaningful to the target language and culture. Creative translation often involves conveying not only the literal meaning of the text, but also its cultural and emotional connotations. It requires translators to have a deep understanding of both languages and the ability to capture the essence of the original text in a way that resonates with the target audience. Based on Xu’s overall understanding of the original poem and taking into account the cultural background of English readers, the dynamic equivalent was constructed, making his translation both linguistically and culturally accurate. Carefully analyzing the source text, taking into account the cultural and contextual implications, and considering various creative strategies to convey these nuances in the target language are important aspects when approaching the task of creative translation.

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