

A Study on Translation of Metaphors in *Fortress Besieged*

-- A Case Study of Jeanne Kelly and Nathan K Mao's English Version

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Abstract: *Fortress Besieged* is the representative work of Ch'ien Chung-Shu, which is unique in style and rich in cultural connotation. A variety of rhetorical and linguistic devices are employed in the novel, such as simile, metaphor, oxymoron, personification, which made a great contribution to the satirical and humorous style of the novel. The extensive use of metaphor adds distinct characters to the text, meanwhile, poses a greater challenge to the translation of the original work and spread of the traditional Chinese language and culture. In the 1970s, Jenny Kelly and Nathan K Mao worked together to translate the book into English, which caused a great sensation at home and abroad. This paper, centered on the novel *Fortress Besieged*, aims to make a simple analysis of the translation strategies of metaphors commonly used in Jenny Kelly and Nathan K Mao's English version. It was found that the translator mainly adopted four strategies to deal with the metaphors in the original text, namely, turning the metaphor into a simile, retention of the metaphorical images, removal and conversion of the vehicle images, this not only vividly recreates the charm of the source language, but also helps to reduce the difficulties of the target language readers and promote Chinese modern and contemporary novels go global.

Keywords: Figure of speech; Metaphor; *Fortress Besieged*.

1. Overview of Metaphor Translation

Metaphor is a kind of obscure analogy, meaning from one thing to another, to explain one thing by another thing, these two things are called "tenor" and "vehicle" respectively. Metaphor, as a rhetorical device, can intensify the tension of word and make it more vivid. As a universal linguistic phenomenon, metaphors can be widely found in various types of texts. The study of metaphor originated in western countries and enjoyed a long history of more than two thousand years. Aristotle defined metaphor as "referring to another thing by the name of one thing". In the 1st century BC, the rhetorician Quintilian put forward Substitution Theory: Metaphor is essentially a rhetorical phenomenon, that is, the conversion between two words, using one word to replace another word. In modern times, Richards proposed the theory of metaphorical interaction, that is, whether a word is used as a metaphor can be judged by whether it provides a tenor and a vehicle and interacts with each other to produce an inclusive meaning. (Richards, 1965:119) After the 1970s, Lakoff made great achievements in the study of metaphor. Lakoff believes that "metaphor is everywhere, and the conceptual system by which human beings think and act is fundamentally metaphorical" (Lakoff & Johnson 1980). Different from the traditional metaphor view, Lakoff and his colleagues regard metaphor as a way of thinking rather than just a linguistic phenomenon.

Tan Weiguo (2007) divided metaphor translation into four categories, namely the understanding and translation of simple metaphor, semi-implicit metaphor and implicit metaphor and complex metaphor. On this basis, he proposed that the translation of English metaphor should focus on literal translation, followed by free translation. Huang Mei (2011) summarized three main methods for translating metaphors at present. The first is the one proposed by Peter Newmark and Eugene A. Nida, which uses specific rules to

guide metaphorical translation according to the actual situation: it includes recurrence of the vehicle; replacement of source vehicle with standard vehicle; translating metaphors in plain words and so on. The second method is to translate relevant metaphors according to the textual features, that is, to translate metaphors according to the types of the text. Newmark divided metaphors into five types, namely dead, cliché, stock, recent and original metaphor and proposed to choose different strategies according to different types of metaphors. The last one is to study metaphor from the cultural aspect, that is, the translation of metaphor is influenced by the cultural framework, and the translation of metaphor largely depends on the relevant cultural factors. Sun Yi (2017) divided schools of metaphor translation studies abroad into six types: (1) Rhetoric theory; (2) Component analysis theory; (3) Discourse analysis theory; (4) Pragmatic theory; (5) Cultural theory and (6) cognitive linguistics theory.

2. Translation Strategies of Metaphors in *Fortress Besieged*

As the only full-length novel of Ch'ien Chung-Shu, *Fortress Besieged* is a satirical novel with unique style in the history of modern Chinese literature. The book takes Fang Hung-Chien, who returned from overseas, as the main line, focusing on his love, friendship, family and career, and satirizing the society at that time in a humorous tone, it depicts the images of intellectuals represented by Fang Hung-Chien in the early period of the Anti-Japanese War ((1937-1945).

Fortress besieged has been translated into English, French, Japanese, Russian and other languages since 1960s, the English version was translated by American sinology writer Jane Kelly in collaboration with Chinese American Nathan K Mao translation, which has been included in the Penguin Classics and become an enduring classic version as well as the model of Chinese literature goes global.

Metaphor has both rhetorical and cognitive functions. In the process of translating *Fortress Besieged*, considering the differences between Chinese and western cultures, the translator has adopted different translation strategies according to the emotional color and context to deal with the metaphor flexibly, which mainly involves retention, removal and transformation of the vehicles and so on, this not only takes into account the differences between Chinese and western cultures and the acceptability of the target readers, but also restores the elegance of the original work to a higher degree, and improves the readability of the translated text.

2.1. Turning the Metaphor into a Simile

Similes usually occurs with figurative words, the basic pattern of simile is as follows: "X is like Y (like Z)", "X" is for the tenor; "Like", for figurative words; "Y" for the vehicle; and "Z" represents resembling points. (Li Bin et al., 2008:27) Compared with metaphor, employment of simile makes the particular text more intuitive and concrete and thus more helpful for understanding. In daily life, different countries and nations have different understandings and associative meanings of the same thing, therefore, in the process of translating literary works, the translators have to turn the metaphor into a simile according to the actual situation if necessary and give the accurate transmission of the text content top priority.

例 1: 她手上生的五根香肠, 灵敏得很, 在头发里抓一下就捉到个虱, 掐死了。(钱钟书, 2002:141)

The five sausage-like fingers were quite nimble. With one pluck she seized a louse. (Kelly & Mao, 2003:154)

A sausage is the tubular food which is made of animal meat and then packed into a long cylinder. A sausage is similar to a finger in that both are long and slender cylinders and belong to the category of meat. The "sausage" here refers to the fingers of the toiling masses have become bloated due to long-term hard work. From the description of the landlady's actions here, it can be seen that the protagonist, while admiring the flexibility of the proprietor's fingers, has a deep empathy for the working people of underclass. The translator here chose to turn the metaphor into a simile, which helps to convey the author's intention to foreign readers.

例 2: "也许你喜欢苏小姐死鱼肚那样的白。你自己就是扫烟囱的小黑炭, 不照照镜子!" (钱钟书, 2002:14)

"Maybe you like Miss Su's dead-fish-belly white. You yourself are as black as a chimney sweep. Just take a look at yourself in the mirror." (Kelly & Mao, 2003:20)

例 3: 自从辛楣一走, 鸿渐对于升级这胡萝卜, 眼睛也看饱了, 嘴忽然不馋了。(钱钟书, 2002:243)

Since Hsin-mei's departure, Hung-Chien had seen enough of this promotion business and his mouth no longer watered for it. (Kelly & Mao, 2003:271)

In example 2 and 3 above, the translator has translated the two metaphors into "a chimney sweep" and "promotion business" respectively, so that the target readers will not be confused.

2.2. Retention of Vehicle Images

As all nations have the same human physiology, they also share the same way of cognitive thinking in some specific fields. Therefore, in the actual social practice, similar experience may be gained. In addition, with the communication and spread of Chinese and western cultures, some western stories and historical cultural backgrounds are

no longer a fantasy for Chinese people. In this case, the vehicles were retained and few difficulties has been left for the target readers to understand in the process of translating, moreover, the target readers can be taken into account to the greatest extent, and the language and style characteristics of the original text can be maintained.

2.2.1. Literal Translation

例 4. 有人叫她“熟食铺子”(charcuterie)...又有人叫她“真理”, 因为据说“真理”是“赤裸裸的”...所以他们修正为“局部的真理”。(钱钟书, 2002: 4)

Some called her a charcuterie—a shop selling cooked meats... Others called her "Truth," since it is said that "the truth is naked." .so, they revised her name to "Partial Truth." (Kelly & Mao, 2003:7)

Here is the description of Miss Bao's clothes when she first appears on the ship in the novel, where the source domain refers to "a charcuterie—a shop selling cooked meats" and the "truth", while the target domain refers to the same, namely Miss Bao. Here is the metaphor of sex as "food" and "truth". The translator has adopted literal translation and retained the vehicles, translating them as "a charcuterie—a shop selling cooked meats" and "truth" respectively, in which some characteristics of "charcuterie" were mapped to Miss Bao. Charcuterie is a delicatessen, it cooks meat to serve a purpose (attracting customers, waiting for them rise to the bait). Like Miss Bao with scantily clad to get men's attention. Truth is the revelation of the principle of nature to the world with nothing reserved. However, considering the current state of Miss Bao and the mapping between "truth" and Miss Bao, the author has made a supplement. By revising it to "partial truth", the vivid metaphor of the original work is retained to the greatest extent, and Miss Bao's "half-naked" state is well reproduced.

例 5. 这一张文凭, 仿佛有亚当, 夏娃下身那片树叶的功用... (钱钟书, 2002:8)

This diploma, it seemed, would function the same as Adam and Eve's figleaf. (Kelly & Mao, 2003:12)

Here, "Adam and Eve" are household figures in the west. In western religious culture, they are the first man and woman in the world who are also quite familiar to Chinese readers, so the literal translation is employed here naturally. Here, the author compares the diploma the protagonist bought with a lot of money to the leaves under Adam and Eve, which are used to hide the stigma and could make the reader ponder at the same time. Since Adam and Eve's FIG leaf was their last barrier and defense after having human feelings—shame, now even the "leaf" is fake, Fang Hun-chien chose to buy a diploma for saving his own face, which showed himself up as utterly ridiculous. The target text retains the tenor and the vehicle, because the cognitive effect reached by the target readers and the source-text readers is consistent in the cognitive environment.

例 6. 你对她说, 方鸿渐“本领虽没有, 脾气很大”, 资本家走狗的走狗是不做的。(钱钟书, 2002:305)

You can just tell her that Fang Hung-Chien, who 'has no ability, but does have a terrific temper', will not be any running dog for a capitalist running dog." (Kelly & Mao, 2003:347)

In Chinese, "running dog" used to refer to a bad guy's accomplices and these who play the jackal to the tiger. However, after a long period of communication between Chinese and western cultures, English has gradually

borrowed and absorbed the expression. Merriam-Webster defines “running dog” as: one who blindly follows someone else’s orders: LACKEY, which dates back to 1925, has since become the norm in English-speaking societies. Therefore, in the translation, the translator carried out a literal translation and retained the original expression.

2.2.2. Literal Translation with Annotation

Utilization of metaphors in literary works can give an added grace to what is already beautiful, making it more vivid, full of wit and humour and thus increasing readability of the works. However, some metaphors may cause ambiguity and increase the difficulty of reading and understanding for the target readers. Therefore, in translation, corresponding annotations can be added on the basis of literal translation, making the original text easier to understand.

例 7 a. 辛楣一肚皮的酒, 几乎全成酸醋.....(钱钟书, 2002: 88)

The wine in Hsin-mei's stomach turned to sour vinegar in his jealousy...(Kelly & Mao, 2003:96)

b. 鸿渐逐渐明白, 这姓赵的对自己无理, 是在吃醋, 当自己是他的情敌。(钱钟书, 2002:46)

It suddenly dawned on Hung-chien that Chao’s rudeness towards him has stemmed from jealousy, for Chao had obviously taken him as his love rival. (Kelly & Mao, 2003:55)

The common ground of the cognition of “vinegar” in Chinese and western cultures is that both of them take “vinegar” as a condiment and a liquid seasoning, which is mainly used to improve taste of the food and belongs to the category of flavouring. The difference is that in long-term daily life and social practice, the cultural connotation of “vinegar” in Chinese culture has been extended, that is, jealousy. There is no equivalent culture in west, so it is difficult to connect the two together. There may be misunderstanding of “醋” and “vinegar” here, by , so as to avoid misunderstanding from readers. Different from Sentence a, Sentence b does not make a comment on the culture of "being jealous", but generally speaking, both choose to "speak frankly", which helps to connect the cognitive world of the target language and the source language readers.

2.3. Removal of vehicle Images

Under the influence of way of thinking, living environment, educational standard and other factors, people’s understanding towards the same particular text may be widely divergent. Therefore, in order to reproduce the spiritual content and convey the main idea of the original text, when necessary, the translator can remove the metaphor to a certain extent and only retain the tenor to avoid the readers into the misunderstanding.

例 8. 太太不忠实, 偷人, 丈夫做了乌龟, 买彩票准中头奖, 赌钱准赢。(钱钟书, 2002:4)

Mr. Fang said that if the wife is unfaithful and has an affair, the husband is sure to take first prize.(Kelly & Mao, 2003:6)

In China, “turtle” is an animal with both positive and negative meanings, and it is quite disgraceful for a man to be called “turtle”, which means that he has been cuckolded and his wife has an affair with others. In addition to this kind of derogatory meaning, on the other hand, “turtle” also represents longevity and these noble men, but it is completely different from that in west. In western culture, turtles are slow, ugly and have difficulty in moving. Therefore, the same

animal evoked by the image is completely different in people with different cultural backgrounds. In the process translation, the translator takes into account the cognitive ability of the target readers and makes some necessary adjustments. They discarded the vehicle to avoid misunderstanding by employing ellipsis.

例 9.“小胖子大诗人曹元朗是不是也请在里面?”看见他那个四喜丸子的脸, 人就饱了。”(钱钟书, 2002:74)

If he is, they can save on the food. Just looking at that meatball face of his will make people feel full”, (Kelly & Mao, 2003:82)

Braised pork balls in gravy are meatballs made of pork and other ingredients, it belongs to the Shandong cuisine and often appears in traditional festive occasions such as weddings, celebration feasts and Chinese Lunar New Year, which has been distinguished for its long history and cultural characteristics. The authors note the similarities in that both are round and covered in fat. With this novel image, Hung-chien’s dislike for Ts’ao Yuan-lang was fully expressed. However, there are no corresponding items in western traditional culture, so in order to adapt to the material world of target readers, the translator omits the metaphor here, so that foreign readers will not have great difficulties in understanding it, and at the same time can convey the author’s implied irony with the help of humorous words.

2.4. Conversion of Vehicle Images

例 10. 辛楣到旅馆...大骂那教育局长是糊涂鸡子儿, 李顾也说“岂有此理。”(钱钟书, 2002:159)

When Hsin-mei returned to the hotel... and cursed the Bureau Chief, calling him a stupid idiot...(Kelly & Mao, 2003:178)

例 11.“不过我是饭桶, 你是了解的, 所以我照顾不了你。”(钱钟书, 2002:238)

“But I am a good-for-nothing, you know. I can’t look after you”(Kelly & Mao, 2003:267)

In the above two examples, “糊涂鸡子儿” and “饭桶” were respectively translated into “a stupid idiot” and “a good-for-nothing”. Since there is no corresponding images in western culture, it would be difficult for target readers to understand if literal translation was adopted here. Finally, the writer translates the two into the above expressions on the basis of combining the cognitive mode of the target readers. In this way, the original metaphorical meaning is reproduced in the target language and in the end, the target readers would have no cognitive obstacles.

3. Conclusion

Translation of metaphors should fully consider the cognitive differences of target readers under different linguistic backgrounds, flexibly apply relevant translation methods and strategies on the basis of understanding, strive for accurate translation, and preferably retain “exotic language”. In *Fortress Besieged*, Ch’ien Chung-Shu had used the seemingly every day but impressive metaphors and vivid language to describe the tenor, making it vivid. In the process of translation, the translator has made adjustment according to the actual situation, adopting targeted translation strategies, dealing with the metaphors in accordance with the society, context and social culture. On the basis of accurately conveying the spirit of the original work, it retains the style of the original work as much as possible so that these wonderful

metaphors can be preserved.

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