

On Schleiermacher's Translation Method based on Hermeneutics and Example Analysis

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Abstract: Schleiermacher's model is the foreignization translation method and domestication translation method based on hermeneutics, and Schleiermacher himself pays attention to the heterogeneity of the original text and foreignization. The foreignizing translation method has brought great inspiration to the cultural school of translation studies, and Schleiermacher also holds an extremely important position in the history of Western translation. Translation is the process of translating the meaning of one text into another language, just as the original author transforms their thoughts into words. From a cultural perspective, translation is not only a transformation of language symbols, but also a form of cultural exchange. As one of the ancient works in China, "The Doctrine of the Mean" is renowned for its profound ideological connotations, and the role played by translation is indelible. To conduct translation activities, the first step is to clarify the translation purpose. Different translators have different translation purposes and have different understandings and interpretations of the text due to differences in knowledge and experience. This paper discusses Schleiermacher's translation method from the perspective of hermeneutics, and based on this, conducts case analysis to understand its application in translation.

Keywords: Hermeneutics; Schleiermacher; The Doctrine of the Mean; Translation strategies; Translator.

1. Introduction

Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher is a renowned German philosopher and Protestant theologian whose translation ideas have had a profound impact in the field of translation. He studied at Harlem University in his early years, especially liked theology and biblical hermeneutics, and was also influenced by rationalism and romanticism. He read widely the famous philosophical works of Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Jacobi, etc. In 1813, Schleiermacher read his paper "On Translation Methods" at a seminar at the Royal Academy of Sciences in Berlin, which caused a sensation. Schleiermacher often considers language translation issues through philosophical methods, and he himself has made significant contributions to hermeneutic theory. Therefore, his translation philosophy mainly starts from hermeneutics and further discusses the relationship between translation and understanding.

2. Philosophical Tracing of Translation Thought

Schleiermacher is both a materialist and an idealism, a monism and a dualist. As a philosopher, Schleiermacher respects and is passionate about the ideas of Greek philosophy. When he came into contact with rationalism in college, he accepted rationalism, affirmed historical criticism, and affirmed humanities and social sciences. As a theologian, influenced by the tradition of the devout sect, Schleiermacher believed that the appropriate root of religion is neither knowledge nor morality, but emotional "Feeling". Religious emotions are people's "godliness", and he supports everyone's devout self-expression of emotions. Unlike other theologians, Schleiermacher never unilaterally marginalized romanticism, and was even influenced by it. He believed that artists' creations were also emotional expressions. In this perspective, he combined religion with romanticism, injecting new interpretations into theology. This is also a characteristic of

his personal thinking. He tended to integrate different schools of thought or opposing concepts, always viewing philosophy, theology, religion, and even morality with a neutral and inclusive attitude, striving to achieve a stable state of harmonious coexistence. It is also because of this way of thinking that Schleiermacher's translation view stands out.

3. Translation Ideas

In the field of translation, Schleiermacher clearly affirmed for the first time the positive significance of reader subjectivity in the understanding process, and established reader subjectivity as one of the basic elements of understanding activities. His translation ideas are mainly reflected in his famous paper "On Translation Methods" published in 1813, which includes generalized translation, the difference between interpretation and translation, proper translation and mechanical translation, translation itself, translator identity, translation methods, and so on.

3.1. Generalized Translation

Schleiermacher's determination of the scope of translation is different from other translation theorists. Usually, theorists believe that translation is a medium of communication between different languages, while Schleiermacher proposed a generalized definition of translation that is ubiquitous. He believed that translation also exists between the same language, such as dialogues between different historical stages of the same language or dialect communication within the same language, which require translation to complete.

3.2. Interpretation and Translation Proper

Schleiermacher was the first person in the West to clearly distinguish and elaborate on translation and interpretation. In his view, interpretation mainly refers to commercial translation, while translation mainly refers to translation in the field of science and art. In this perspective, interpreting, as a commercial translation, is just a mechanical translation activity that can be completed by anyone with a certain level

of proficiency in bilingualism. As long as obvious errors are avoided, there is no distinction between good and bad translation. Translation, which is related to the fields of art and academia, is the true translation, and translators engaged in translation activities are the true translators. In the fields of art and academic culture, language is extremely complex, and writing is not only a product of language, but also an externalization of the author's language spirit. Therefore, translation activities are a very difficult challenge, and the requirements for translators are extremely strict. On the one hand, translators need to master super high language skills without being trapped in the constraints of their own language; On the other hand, translators need to have strong comprehension and interpretive abilities, as well as a certain level of creative ability.

3.3. Translation Strategies

Schleiermacher opposed the two translation methods of interpretation and simulation that emerged in German society at that time, believing that the translation activities achieved through these two methods were not true translation. To truly pursue the connotation and significance of art and academia, he proposed two approaches: author-centered foreignization and reader-centered domestication. In his translation perspective, foreignization is a translation strategy that leans towards the source language, meaning that the translator aims to move readers closer to the author without disturbing the original author; Domestication is a translation strategy that leans towards the target language, where the translator aims to move the author closer to the reader without disturbing the reader as much as possible. He believed that translators have and only have two choices: foreignization and domestication, neither of which can be reconciled. He himself supported foreignization translation and did not advocate using the popular language of the target language to translate the source language. He argued that the translation should retain some foreign cultural characteristics, so that readers can appreciate foreign customs and feel foreign culture when approaching the author.

4. Hermeneutic and Schleiermacher

Hermeneutics originated in Germany and its basic meaning is "the art of interpretation", which is a theory about understanding and interpreting the meaning of texts. In ancient Greece, hermeneutics was mainly used to explain logic, debating, and some religious and literary classics; During the Middle Ages, it became a branch of biblical research; During the Renaissance and Reformation, hermeneutics jumped out of the religious framework and expanded its research to ancient cultural classics. Schleiermacher made great contributions in the field of hermeneutics and promoted the development of hermeneutics. As a philosopher, Schleiermacher often considers language and translation issues through philosophical methodology. As a result, his translation ideas often carry the shadow of hermeneutics. Hermeneutics has made two breakthroughs in its development. The first was promoted by the German philosopher Schleiermacher to become universal hermeneutics, and the second was promoted by the German philosophers Heidegger and Gadamer to become philosophical hermeneutics. In the field of translation, the former emphasizes the author's subjectivity, while the latter emphasizes the translator's subjectivity.

4.1. General Hermeneutics and Philosophical Hermeneutics

On the solid foundation of the pioneers of hermeneutics, Astor and Wolf, Schleiermacher established the innovative theory of "general hermeneutics" from the 18th to 19th centuries, which broke through the limitations of specific interpretive objects. In the past, hermeneutics believed that understanding was a normal situation, misunderstandings only occurred by chance, and certain special texts such as the Bible and the Epic of Homer had the need and necessity for interpretation, while Schleiermacher proposed that any text had the need for interpretation. Due to the differences in time, language, historical and cultural background, and living environment between the authors and readers of the text, there is a personalized phenomenon between the authors and readers, which makes misunderstandings a common occurrence in the understanding process. This misunderstanding not only occurs in complex texts, but also in the understanding of the simplest things. Where there are misunderstandings, there is hermeneutics. Schleiermacher believed that the art of avoiding misunderstandings in hermeneutics cannot be marginalized solely by being confined to the type of text. As a result, under his efforts, hermeneutics shifted from local to general, from special to universal, from specific rules and techniques to methodological theory, and ultimately achieved general hermeneutics.

Schleiermacher systematically constructed general hermeneutics based on grammar interpretation and psychology. In the 20th century, Heidegger turned to ontology, and his research on hermeneutics was no longer limited to methodology and epistemology. Therefore, he turned from humanism to philosophy. He believed that understanding is not only related to human subjectivity, but also limited by the "pre understanding" prior to the act of understanding. Pre understanding refers to the factors that determine understanding itself that already exist before understanding. Therefore, understanding behavior is not only about understanding the general facts of existence, but also about understanding the potential possibilities of existence. On the basis of Heidegger, Gadamer systematically combined ontology with Schleiermacher's general hermeneutics to form philosophical hermeneutics, with "understanding" as its core.

4.2. Author and Translator

General hermeneutics emphasizes the position of the author of the original text, emphasizes its writing intention, and aims to reconstruct the text and the author's original intention. As a result, Schleiermacher's own hermeneutic theory greatly influenced his translation perspective, and his translation perspective also improved his hermeneutic theory. His hermeneutics is often associated with linguistic philosophy and psychology. He attaches great importance to language and emphasizes the close connection between language and thinking, which cannot be separated. Language is external thinking, while text is the embodiment of the author's thinking. The essence of translation is an interpretation, and when a translator wants to translate a language text, it is to interpret it. In addition to understanding the literal meaning, Schleiermacher believes that translators also need to understand the author's psychological original intention. The psychological interpretation method proposed by him based on the grammar interpretation method is

precisely the interpretation method for the author's psychological reconstruction. The translator first correctly understands the literal meaning of the text under the grammar interpretation method, and then creatively thinks, substituting himself into the author's writing thinking, imagining the author's creative state of mind, grasping the author's writing style, and then expressing it in the target language. Thus, the translator starts from the art of hermeneutics, which comprehends the meaning of the text, and achieves true translation. Starting from methodology and epistemology, based on universal hermeneutics, Schleiermacher advocates "author-centered theory", in which the author dominates the text and the reader, and is the center of the text, the author and the reader. Translators should also be centered around the author and constantly approach the author during the translation process.

From the perspective of philosophical hermeneutics, the interpretive process of translation is dominated by the translator. Philosophical hermeneutics believes that translation is actually a process of interpretation, comprehension, and expression. Language is the medium of interpretation, and the translator is the "person who understands", that is, the subject who initiates the act of understanding. Due to the limited potential of human beings and the infinite existence, understanding this behavior becomes relative. On this basis, translation activities become a process in which translators strive to understand the source language, constantly approach the original author, and ultimately express the target language. Different social periods have different interpretations, and the translator's subjective initiative is fully reflected in the translation process. Translators may have different understandings and interpretations of the text due to factors such as identity, experience, knowledge, and emotions. For different purposes, in order to understand the original author's intentions, translators will choose different translation strategies to convert language and text, conveying the original author's intentions to the target language readers.

5. Example Analysis

5.1. English Translation of the Doctrine of the Mean

The Doctrine of the Mean is a moral philosophy monograph in ancient China that discusses the realm of life cultivation. It is one of the indispensable classics in the history of Chinese thought and is said to have been written by Zi Si during the Warring States period. The main content of "The Doctrine of the Mean" is to regard "the Doctrine of the Mean" as the highest standard of moral behavior and "utmost sincerity" as the highest achievable realm in life. The Doctrine of the Mean was originally the 31 chapter of the Book of Rites, one of the Five Classics, and was later interpreted by Zhu Xi, a scholar of the Song Dynasty. The Doctrine of the Mean, the University, the Analects of Confucius, and Mencius were collectively called "four books". Due to its profound philosophical connotations, after the Song and Yuan dynasties, "The Doctrine of the Mean" also became an official textbook for schools and a mandatory reading for imperial examinations, which had a great impact on ancient Chinese education and society.

As one of the classic works of Confucianism, "The Doctrine of the Mean" has rich literary research value, and its reputation has been widely spread abroad. Among them,

many domestic and foreign translators interpret and translate their content. According to records, as early as 1667, Italian missionaries to China translated "The Doctrine of the Mean", but the translation was in Latin. The earliest English translation of "The Doctrine of the Mean" was translated by British Protestant missionary David Collie and published in Malacca in 1828. Later, the English translation of The Doctrine of the Mean set off a climax in the 20th century. Domestic and foreign translators translated it one after another, and there were many academic reference versions. The more famous translators include the English missionaries James Legge, Wei Lixian, Gu Hongming, Leonard Arthur Lyall, Wing-tsit Chan, etc. Among them, the translation versions of James Legge and Gu Hongming are the most famous. Under the influence of different eras, societies, and ideological trends, although the climax has come to an end, the re-translation of "The Doctrine of the Mean" is still ongoing. Among many English versions, this part chooses James Legge and Gu Hongming as the research objects, and combines historical facts to analyze the translator himself, translation purpose, translation strategies and other aspects from the perspective of hermeneutics and Schleiermacher.

5.2. Translator Information

Among the numerous English versions of The Doctrine of the Mean, the versions of James Legge and Gu Hongming are the most prominent. James Legge is a famous sinologist in modern England. He was the president of Hong Kong Yinghua College and a missionary of the London Missionary Society. He was the first person to systematically study and translate ancient Chinese classics. During the 25 years from 1861 to 1886, he translated all major Chinese classics such as the Four Books and the Five Classics, totaling 28 volumes. He is known as the Three Masters of Chinese to European Translation, along with French scholar Seraphin Couvreur and German scholar Richard Wilhelm, and is also the first recipient of the Rulian Translation Award. Gu Hongming was the first Chinese person to master Western science, language, and Eastern Chinese studies during the Qing Dynasty. He translated three parts of China's "Four Books" - "The Analects", "The Doctrine of the Mean", and "The Great Learning"; He is also the author of English books such as Oxford Movement in China and Chinese Spirit. He is keen to publicize the oriental culture and spirit to Westerners and has had a significant impact.

Different translators have different perspectives and translation purposes. In the late Ming and early Qing dynasties, on the one hand, Jesuits began to preach in China with advanced Western science. In order to make Chinese people believe in Catholicism, missionaries first adopted a strategy of "cultural adaptation", that is, actively integrating into the mainstream Confucian culture in China, in order to supplement and surpass Confucian culture. In the process of communication and integration of The Two Cultures, translation is the medium of cultural integration, which also sets off the second climax in the history of Chinese translation. In order to preach, there were missionaries who learned Chinese etiquette, wore Chinese clothes, and asked servants to call "Lao Ye". As a member of the missionary, James Legge's translation of ancient Chinese classics also provided a way for Westerners to understand Chinese traditional culture, so as to arouse Westerners' interest in China and attract more Westerners to join the ranks of missionaries. Therefore, his original intention in translation was to help

Westerners understand Chinese thought and culture, and his purpose was still to preach. In the translation process of "The Doctrine of the Mean," he paid more attention to preserving the characteristics of the source language. Therefore, his main translation strategy was foreignization. In his translation of "The Doctrine of the Mean", for example, when translating central concepts such as "tian", "dao", "xing", "zhong", "he", he chose a translation similar to the literal translation of source language concepts, such as Heaven, the path, the nature, the state of equilibrium, the state of harmony, etc. On the other hand, due to various historical factors, Chinese people were extremely unsure of their own culture at that time, and "Western learning spreading eastward" was very popular. However, Gu Hongming still held great confidence in Chinese culture. Gu Hongming, on the other hand, has been influenced by Western culture since childhood. He travels to Europe and knows multiple languages. It was on the basis of accepting Western culture that he began to delve into the study of Chinese ideology and culture. To translate Chinese cultural classics, it is not only necessary for translators to arm themselves with the concepts and ideas of the Chinese nation, but also to find their counterparts in European languages. Therefore, Gu Hongming's purpose in translating "The Doctrine of the Mean" was simply to promote Chinese culture to the West. In order to make it easier for Western readers to understand, he chose a domestication translation strategy based on his knowledge of Western culture. Compared with James Legge, his translation is easier to read and understand for western readers. He translated some of the minor thoughts as God, the moral law, the law of our being, our true self or moral being, moral order, etc.

5.3. Translation Comparison

(1) Gu's: The Universal Order or Conduct of Life; the Conduct of Life or the Universal Order of Confucius

Legge's: The Doctrine of the Mean

Confucius proposed the concept of the "mean", and later Confucian scholars continuously improved and annotated it, gradually expanding the concept of the "mean". There are many versions of the interpretation of the "mean". One explanation is that "mean" requires us to grasp a moderate limit, so that things can reach a balance, reach a reasonable and moderate level. To make society more stable, to prevent those who hold high positions from indulging, to prevent those who hold low positions from betraying and going astray, and to achieve a balance in one's life at any stage, to reconcile one's own contradictions in life, is the best state of moderation. Another explanation is that "mean" refers to the nature of people who are neither good nor evil. The book revolves around this attitude towards life. Gu Hongming regarded "the Doctrine of the Mean" as a macro concept and believed that it is a development of the concept proposed by Confucius, providing guidance for people and setting life goals, that is, people should adhere to the Doctrine of the Mean in daily life and achieve the nature of destiny. Therefore, it is translated as "The Universal Order or Conduct of Life". James Legge, starting from the original intention of Confucius, believed that the "zhong" was a neutral state, and people's behavior was moderate, neither too much nor too little. He translated it as "mean, a quality, condition, or way of doing sth. that is in the middle of two extremes and better than either of them", believing that "yong" has the meaning of "harmony" and translating "yong" as the state of equilibrium. James Legge believed that the meaning of "Zhong" and "Yong" were

similar, so he only kept the former when translating the title of the book, which was translated as The Doctrine of the Mean. In fact, James Legge agreed with Zisi's development of the word "zhong yong" in his translation notes, but for the purpose of missionary, he chose to retain the original intention of Confucius and use the authority of Confucius to deny Zisi's development of Confucianism.

(2) Gu's: Thus, his fame and name will spread and fill all the civilized world extending even to savage countries.

Legge's: Therefore, his fame overspreads the Middle Kingdom, and extends to all barbarous tribes.

James Legge believes that "tian xia" is China, and his ideology and culture is to exaggerate and influence China. His purpose is to want Westerners to understand Chinese culture, not follow Chinese thought. In his psychology, "Western learning" is still at a higher level. Therefore, in the original text, "China" only refers to China itself, so it is translated as the Middle Kingdom. And Gu Hongming is a Chinese, who is well aware that during the period when the original author of "The Doctrine of the Mean" lived, the Chinese believed that the world was China, that is, the world was China. And for the purpose of promoting Chinese cultural thought, he wanted it to spread to the world, so he translated it as all the civilized world.

(3) Gu's: A man may be able to renounce the possession of Kingdoms and Empire, be able to spurn the honors and emoluments of office, be able to trample upon bare, naked weapons, with all that he shall not be able to find the central clue in his moral being.

Legge's: The kingdom, its states, and its families, may be perfectly ruled; dignities and emoluments may be declined; naked weapons may be trampled under the feet; but the course of the Mean cannot be attained to.

There is a concept of "biased compound words" in Chinese, such as "qi zi", "bei huan", "chuang hu", etc. When used, only one morpheme is taken as the meaning. Gu Hongming believed that the word "country" in the original text was a compound word with a partial meaning, so he only took the meaning of "country" and translated it as kingdoms and empire. James Legge retained the meaning of "jia" and added families. The term "bai ren" sometimes refers to the blade part, and sometimes extends to a sharp knife. Both translations take the former meaning and translate it as naked weapons. But according to Zhu Xi's interpretation, the original meaning is "the world can be governed by peace, the salaries of officials and nobles can be resigned, the sharp blade can be trampled on, and only the path of the middle ground is not easy to achieve". Moreover, most interpretations have taken an extended meaning, and perhaps translators have misunderstood the original meaning.

6. Summary

Schleiermacher's translation theory also has shortcomings. His dualism of domestication and foreignization advocates for both the author and the reader, greatly neglecting the influence of the translator's subject in it. In addition, foreignization translation became a nationalist cultural theory that enhanced the national spirit in society at that time, which also reflected another deficiency of Schleiermacher's translation theory, which was that translation was too closely related to political culture. However, it cannot be denied that Schleiermacher greatly promoted the evolution and development of modern German language, and his hermeneutic translation perspective and foreignization

translation strategy greatly influenced the translation studies of Steiner, Venuti, and others. Until today, Schleiermacher's rich and complex views on translation still hold an important position in Western translation theory.

Compared with Gu Hongming's translation and James Legge's translation, the purpose of translation can not only affect the translator's choice of translation strategies, but also affect the quality of the translation, helping to conceal the translator's true thoughts. As a missionary, James Legge's goal is to make Chinese people accept the baptism of Christianity and to build monotheism in Confucian China. He always looked at Chinese culture from the "high" perspective of Westerners. For example, in Chinese tradition, "heaven" is another name for nature. Chinese people advocate naturalism. Although they regard "heaven" as the highest master of nature and society, they do not endow it with divinity. In simple terms, Chinese people believe in "people" themselves, and James Legge translated it into God in order not to shake God's position in his mind, and firmly believe that God is the omnipotent master. Thus, even if he had read out the numerous Chinese cultural meanings in the original text, he refused to add them to the translation, only briefly mentioning them in the annotations. From his translation, we can still see the shadow of "Orientalism" and "cultural colonialism". Gu Hongming, on the other hand, translated "The Doctrine of the Mean" for the purpose of sincerely promoting Chinese ideology and spreading Chinese culture. He chose a domestication strategy and, based on his own understanding of the original text, combined with the explanations of other scholars, made every effort to express the meaning of the original text to Western readers. He is one of the active representatives of cultural dissemination. In recent years, the slogan of "Chinese culture going global" has become louder and louder, and people from all walks of life have made efforts to promote it. Translation is also an important way for cultural dissemination. And from the comparison of translations, it can also be seen that to do a good job in translation, not only does one need to have a solid language foundation and a deep understanding of cultural background, but the initial purpose of translation and the translator's subjective initiative also have a place.

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