

On E-C Translation Strategies of *CARPENTARIA* under Cultural Translation Theory

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Abstract: *Carpentaria*, created by the celebrated Indigenous Australian writer Alexis Wright, is a highly praised work that vividly and profoundly showcases the blend of ancient Australian legends, myths, and real life, which was honored with the Miles Franklin Literary Award in 2007. Cultural translation theory emphasizes the necessity of remaining true to the original text's linguistic form while also considering the diversity of cultural backgrounds and the cultural adaptability needed for the target-language audience. Under cultural translation theory, this paper focuses on Li Yao's Chinese translated version, briefly analyzing how, through his translation, such a wonderful story as *Carpentaria* and the rich culture behind are made accessible to the Chinese readers.

Keywords: Cultural Translation Theory; *Carpentaria*; Translation Strategies.

1. Introduction

Carpentaria is an insightful exploration of Australian Aboriginal culture, allowing readers to reflect on the land, history and social issues of the Australian Aborigines through this literary work. The success of this work cannot be separated from Wright's profound understanding of the local culture and her ability to convey it, and it is undoubtedly a challenging task to effectively convey the culture and values behind it to the readers who are unfamiliar with the cultural background in a cross-cultural context. With the help of cultural translation theory, this paper takes Li Yao's Chinese translation version as the target of study, and explores what translation strategies and methods the translator adopts to reproduce the culture of the original work and bring it to the Chinese readers, with the aim of exploring how literary translation can promote mutual communication and understanding among different cultures in the context of globalization nowadays.

2. Cultural Translation Theory

Traditional translation theory takes language as the object of study, emphasizes "equivalence" and "fidelity", and considers translation as the process of converting symbols of different languages into each other. However, Susan Bassnett, the renowned translation theorist, famous poet and literary scholar, and one of the representatives of the cultural translation theory, discussed the theory in *Translation, History and Culture*, which she co-edited with André Lefevere in 1990. The book emphasizes the importance of culture in translation and believes that translation should be based on culture, thus establishing the position of cultural translation theory in contemporary translation research. According to cultural translation theory, translation emphasizes on cultural communication; culture takes precedence, with information coming second. An important principle in Bassnett's thought on translation is that translation is never a purely linguistic act or a simple process of decoding and reorganization, but more importantly, it is also an act of communication, which is deeply rooted in the culture where the language is embedded. The core of cultural

translation theory is to realize cultural functional equivalence. Translation should not be limited to the description of the text in the source language, but lies in the functional equivalence of the text in the target culture. To realize cultural functional equivalence, the translator's subjective initiative should be brought into play. Bassnett pointed out that the translator's task as a "cultural interpreter" is far more than linguistic expression, but also try to predict the meaning of the words.

The theory of cultural translation proposed by Bassnett has successfully broken through the limitation that translation is only regarded as an activity on the linguistic level. This theory opens up a new world of translation research and extends the scope of translation to the deep communication and understanding of culture. The theory of cultural translation emphasizes that in the process of translation, the translator should fully respect and understand the uniqueness of the source language and culture, strive to convey its inherent cultural qualities, and at the same time need to effectively communicate with the target language and culture, so as to realize the role of a bridge between the two cultures. At a time when globalization is deepening and advancing, the theory of cultural translation provides a new perspective and method for the dissemination of national culture. It not only helps people from different cultural backgrounds to understand and appreciate each other's cultural characteristics at a deeper level, but also is of great significance in promoting the diversity of the world's cultures as well as the mutual respect and learning among cultures. The cultural translation theory has an inestimable guiding role in leading us how to better carry out cross-cultural communication and enhance understanding and cooperation among different peoples.

3. Background of *Carpentaria*

The Indigenous Australian novel *Carpentaria* by Aboriginal writer Alexis Wright, is one of the most influential works of its kind. This novel, with its deeply moving Indigenous narratives and immense artistic appeal, made Wright the first Indigenous writer to win Australia's premier literary honor, the Miles Franklin Award in 2007. Additionally, the book has been honored with the Queensland Premier's Literary Awards for Fiction, the Australian Literature Gold Award and other prizes.

3.1. Cultural Background

Carpentaria is a significant work that has captured widespread attention in Australian literary. Set in Carpentaria Bay in the northern part of Australia, the novel narrates the conflicts between the mining company Gurfurrit and two Indigenous tribes from the east and west of Desperance town. It weaves together the internal struggles within the tribes and the generational conflicts between the old and the new, filled with dramatic tensions. The story is deeply rooted in the land, culture, and history of the Australian Indigenous people, especially focusing on their life conditions and inner worlds in the face of modernization and social changes. Through the complex relationships and events, *Carpentaria* showcases the conflicts and integration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, as well as the Indigenous people's deep attachment to their land, traditions, and cultural identity.

This work employs a unique narrative technique, blending Indigenous traditional oral storytelling, Dreamtime stories, and modern literary skills to construct a world that is both mystical and real. It not only immerses readers in the rich and profound implications of Indigenous culture but also delves deeply into the challenges that the Indigenous communities are facing in maintaining their cultural identity in the waves of globalization. Through *Carpentaria*, Alexis Wright successfully brings the Indigenous voices, their stories, and cultural features to a broader audience, aiming to challenge colonial authority and advocate for the rights and interests of Indigenous peoples.

Therefore, the importance of translating and disseminating *Carpentaria* lies not only in promoting a literary work but also in its deep cultural significance and social value. On the one hand, the history, culture, and traditions of Australian Indigenous people might still be unfamiliar to many international readers. Translating this text can help foster the awareness and understanding of Indigenous Australian culture among people from different cultural backgrounds, spreading the message of promoting and protecting minority cultures. On the other hand, from a literary perspective, *Carpentaria* reflects the diversity of human societies and nature through a unique perspective. Translating this text also contributes to enriching the essence of world literature by bringing these distinctive perspectives and rich cultural depths to the world, thereby promoting the development of diversity in literature.

3.2. Linguistic Background

A significant linguistic feature of *Carpentaria*, and also a challenging aspect of its translation, is its distinct Indigenous characteristics. The source text incorporates numerous Indigenous words and expressions rooted in Australian vernacular, carrying specific cultural meanings and the author's unique emotions. This presents a challenge for translators, who must find appropriate expressions in the target language that convey the original meanings without losing their cultural and emotional nuances. On the narrative level, the author employs a non-linear structure and oral history writing method, an approach that is relatively uncommon in literature. This poses difficulties for translation, as translators need to effectively communicate the shifts between different timelines and perspectives while maintaining the story's fluidity and coherence. The author's intention to deconstruct colonial authority through the work's language means the original text, from its vernacular to its narrative structure, is inherently complex.

Therefore, translators are facing the added challenge of fully understanding the culturally loaded words in the source text, which are full of Australian Aboriginal characteristics, and the worldview conveyed behind them, but also to fulfill the mission of the source text in terms of narration and value transmission with a text that both retains the characteristics of the source text and is comprehensible to the target language readers.

4. Translation Strategies of *Carpentaria*

According to cultural translation theory, translators must convey the cultural information contained within the source text through translation, accurately reproducing it to achieve the equivalency in the target culture. Based on the original text's features and Professor Li Yao's Chinese translation version, we can observe a transition from deep understanding to creative adaptation. Faced with this challenging task, the translator needs not only a thorough grasp of the unique cultural connotations and linguistic style of the original work but must also skillfully select and apply translation strategies and methods. This involves the balance between localization and fidelity to the source text, aiming not just to replicate the source text but to make it resonate with target language readers. While maintaining the original story's charm, the translator also needs to present the Chinese readers with nearly the same literary value and reading experience.

4.1. Restoration of the Source Language

The original text of *Carpentaria* has numerous culturally loaded terms and localized expressions. To preserve its unique linguistic style and cultural traits in the translation, allowing readers to experience the work in its most authentic form, translators extensively used literal translation. However, he did not rely solely on pure literal translation but also employed a combination of "literal translation plus annotations" and "literal translation plus quotation marks". On the one hand, this approach retains the connotations of the source text to the greatest extent possible, especially for expressions that have no equivalent in the target language. On the other hand, it also highlights the cultural elements and concepts of the original work, facilitating a deeper understanding of its underlying meanings and cultural background for the readers.

4.1.1. Literal Translation Plus Annotations

The translator used the method of literal translation plus annotations in many places in the translation, translating many culturally loaded words related to Australian or Aboriginal cultural background and explaining their cultural background with annotations, which retains the style of the source text without disturbing the readers and at the same time complements the background knowledge without missing the meaning of the original text.

Example 1: ...from somebody driving around the outback's dying towns and Aboriginal camps on pension day, selling the necessities of life for a profit of three to four hundred per cent after costs.

Target text: ...从一位每逢发放养老金的日子,就开着汽车到内地满目萧瑟的城镇和土著人的营地出售生活必需品赚三四倍利润的小贩...

Analysis: In dictionary, the meaning of "outback" is "the remote and usually uninhabited inland districts of Australia".

In Chinese it can be translated as "内地" or "内陆地区", but "内地" is widely understood as the claimed jurisdictions of the People's Republic of China except for Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao. If it is translated as "内陆地区", it is not in line with the linguistic style of the original text, so the translator translated it as "内地" with the annotation of "指澳大利亚偏僻而人口稀少的地方". While retaining the linguistic features of the original text and not disturbing the reader's reading fluency, the translator also avoided ambiguity.

Example 2: He said the government should put the Abos to work...

Target text: 他说, 政府应该让土佬去干活。

Analysis: In English, "Abo" is an extremely offensive word for an Aborigine. Here, the translator translates "Abos" as "土佬" and adds the annotation, "Abo, a contemptuous term for the Aborigines of Australia". Without the annotation, Chinese readers may not be able to understand the connotation and reference of "土佬" in the text, and at the same time, the annotation also conveys to the readers an explanation of the sentiment of contempt within the expression in the original language, which is a complete restoration of the source text in terms of language and semantics at the same time.

Example 3: 'Wanyingkanyi ninji nanagkurru jila?' What are you doing there? And she, like a queen, said grandiloquently, 'Wawaru. Nothing.'

Target text: "你在这干什么?" 白发老太太像女王一样, 很威严地说: "什么也不干!"

Example 4: something like malirriminji wadara Malbu, old prickly bush humpy man.

Target text: 爱生气的丛林破屋里的老家伙!

Example 5: 'Wanyimba?' What's wrong?

Target text: "怎么啦?"

Example 6: 'Kurkamarra,' many mob

Target text: "许多人"

Analysis: These four examples appear in the magical experience of Norm's, in which the mythological yinbirras (ghosts in the story) speak the words he cannot understand. These are Australian Aboriginal languages, while the source text appended its English meaning to each of the native languages. In the Chinese translation, the translator has opted for a literal translation based on the interpretation, with an annotation of "原文均为澳大利亚土著语" and that the Aboriginal language has been omitted from the translation. The use of annotation is a reflection of respect for the culture of the source text. Out of consideration for the fluency of the translation and the necessity of restoration, the translator does not necessarily need to present the Aboriginal language in the Chinese translation, but can use the method of annotation to bring this information directly to the readers, which avoids omitting or replacing the Aboriginal language that is difficult to deal with in the text, and maintains the cultural characteristics and uniqueness of the text, as well as retaining the magical atmosphere of the passage to the maximum extent.

4.1.2. Literal Translation plus Quotation Marks

The translator uses the practice of literal translation with quotation marks in many parts of the target text, and much of this treatment in the translation involves the rhetoric of the original text, in which the author conveys the rhetorical features and cultural connotations of the source text on the basis of retaining the literal meaning of the source text to the greatest extent possible, in a way that suggests the

connotations of different cultures behind the original text to the reader .

Example 7: The sea water following in the serpent's wake, swarming in a frenzy of tidal waves...

Target text: 海水翻滚着滔滔巨浪, 沿大蛇留下的“尾迹”...

Analysis: In dictionary, "wake" as a noun means "a trail of distributed water or air left by the passage of a ship or aircraft". Metaphor and exaggeration are used here to compare the snake to a ship at sea, and the word "wake" is used to modify the trail left by the snake to reflect the large size of the snake. In the translation, the translator uses "尾迹" and puts it in quotation marks, which retains the semantics and the readers' feelings of the source text. At the same time, the use of quotation marks also conveys the rhetoric implied by the source text, and tries to retain the feelings that the readers of the source text to Chinese readers.

Example 8: It takes a particular kind of knowledge to go with the river, whatever its mood.

Target text: 和大河相处, 不管它“心情”如何, 你都要有特别的知识。

Analysis: Here the translator has added quotation marks to the word "mood" in the literal translation of the source text, which does not require any special processing or treatment of the semantics of the sentence, but similarly, the source text also uses metaphor. The river has no life, but in the translation, the metaphor contained in "心情" with the help of quotation mark is reproduced. The translation vividly conveys the power of the river as a nature far beyond human beings that the original wants to express, and strengthens the power of appeal of the translation. In addition, the translation also prompts the reader to notice that there may be cultural and contextual differences in how the same natural phenomenon is described in different languages. It treats the source text in terms of linguistic and literary beauty respectively, so that the different cultural exchanges between the Australian and Chinese languages can permeate all parts of the translation.

4.2. Approach to the Target Language

Translation, in the process of transmitting the voice of the original text and carrying out cultural communication, apart from preserving the style of the original text, the most important task is to bring the text to the readers of the target language successfully. In addition to preserving the style and cultural connotation of the source text by various translation methods, translator also make various efforts, such as free translation and Chinese four-character phrases to make the translation close to the Chinese language habits and to improve the readability of the target text, so that the Chinese readers can better understand the story.

4.2.1. Free Translation

Example 9: The story continued to be told. Even if it was hearsay.

Target text: 故事继续流传。或者说那只是不胫而走的谣言。

Analysis: The phrase "不胫而走" here is a Chinese idiom meaning that something spreads on its own without any obvious impetus, and it is often used to describe the rapid spread of rumors without a source. The translator has accurately captured the meaning of "hearsay" in the original text and used the technique of addition to make complementation based on the meaning of "rumor", which

shows the translator's in-depth understanding of the cultural habits and context of the target language. In addition, "even if" is treated as "或者说". "Even if" in the original language expresses a conditional or hypothetical situation, implying that the story continues to be told even though it has been heard. By translating it as "或者说", the translator skillfully transforms this hypothetical tone into a kind of supplementary explanation, which enhances the explanatory and speculative nature, and makes the whole sentence more fluent and more in line with the Chinese expression habit.

Example 10: So this was how it was.

Target text: 生活就是这样继续着。

Analysis: The original sentence "So this was how it was." is a typical short but far-reaching English expression that shows people's perception and acceptance of the reality. In translating it into "生活就是这样继续着", the translator not only captures the meaning of the original sentence, but also deepens the emotional color. The addition of "生活" in the translation concretizes the abstract meaning of "it" in the original text, which is more in line with the Chinese expression habit and easier to be understood by Chinese readers. In addition, the added expression "继续着" not only conveys the meaning of the original text, but also emphasizes the helplessness that life is moving forward no matter what kind of reality we are facing, which increases the depth and power of the original sentence and perfectly grasps the context of the original text.

4.2.2. Use of Chinese Four-Character Phrases

The translator uses a large number of four-character phrases in the translation. Four-character phrase, also known as four-character idiom, occupies a unique and important position in Chinese culture. It usually consists of four Chinese characters, which are concise but full of profound meaning, and can highly summarize and concisely express a certain truth, emotion, phenomenon, or historical or cultural knowledge. The use of four-character phrase not only reflects the rhythmic beauty of the language, but also reflects the essence of Chinese thought and rich culture.

Example 11: a creature larger than storm clouds, came down from the stars, laden with its own creative enormity.

Target text: 比暴风雨中的乌云还大的怪物,满载他自己创造的“穷凶极恶”,从星星上盘旋而下。

Example 12: Calling innocent little black girls from a distant community

Target text: 钟声召唤天真无邪的黑人小姑娘从一个遥远的村落走来`

Example 13: Nearer, as he moved through the bush, wet from the mist

Target text: 他穿过水雾蒙蒙的丛林向前走了几步

Analysis: In Examples 11 and 12, the translator translates "enormity" as "穷凶极恶" and "innocent" as "天真无邪", instead of directly dealing them with "邪恶" or "天真", choosing appropriate four-character phrases on the basis of accurately conveying the meaning of the source text, and also

enriching the emotional color of the text. In Example 13, the translator translates the concise description "wet from the mist" in the original text as "水雾蒙蒙", which vividly depicts the surroundings of the bush, implying a hazy, moist touch and a quiet, mysterious atmosphere, greatly enhancing the emotional tone and appeal of the text, which gives the readers a more intuitive picture of the scene presented in the story. Moreover, in Chinese, "水雾蒙蒙" reads more smoothly and naturally, with the beauty of rhyme, which enhances the artistry of the translation.

5. Conclusion

Translation goes far beyond merely converting one language into another; in the realm of literary translation, this conversion is even a profound art. With cultural translation theory, this paper analyzes how Professor Li Yao adeptly translated *Carpentaria*, such a literary work of profound cultural connotations and entrusted with a vital cultural mission. Through his meticulous translation, not only were the original story and cultural essence faithfully conveyed, but his translation also closely appealed to the target readers, showcasing unique charm and profound meaning. Professor Li Yao himself has shared that translating *Carpentaria* both deepened his understanding of Australian Indigenous cultures and enriched his comprehension of literary translation. This illustrates the significant implications of intercultural interaction in today's era of globalization.

Through the analysis of this translation practice, this paper hopes to provide useful thoughts for our translation work, especially literature translation, as well as how to build cross-cultural bridges during the translation process in such a multicultural era.

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