



Study on the Translation of Culture-Loaded Words in *Frog* from the Perspective of Domestication and Foreignization

Haitao Wen

School of Foreign Languages, Shanxi Normal University, Taiyuan, Shanxi, China.

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Corresponding author: Haitao Wen, School of Foreign Languages, Shanxi Normal University, Taiyuan, Shanxi, China.

Abstract

Frog is written by Mo Yan. Based on the history of rural fertility in the past 60 years in China, *Frog* tells the life experience of a rural female doctor "Gugu" who has been engaged in obstetrics and gynecology for more than 50 years. It also reflects the difficult course of the family-planning policy in China. This work contains many culture-loaded words. With a strong cultural color, culture-loaded words reflect our national culture. Therefore, the study of the translation of culture-loaded words is crucial. This paper analyzes the translation of culture-loaded words according to the classification of culture-loaded words based on the theory of domestication and foreignization. The research concluded that: Howard Goldblatt mainly uses the foreignization strategy in translating the culture-loaded words of *Frog* to better bring Chinese culture to the world, and appropriately uses the domestication strategy to ensure that the works can be accepted by the target language readers. In order to achieve the dual purpose, the author suggests that domestication and foreignization can be reasonably combined. This paper provides a new theoretical perspective for studying the translation of culture-loaded words in *Frog*, and helps readers better understand culture-loaded words.

Keywords

Domestication, foreignization, culture-loaded words, *Frog*

1. Introduction

With the deepening of economic globalization, cultural exchanges have become closer and closer. Chinese literary works need to go to the world, so that foreign people can understand Chinese culture and improve China's cultural soft power. To achieve this goal, translation is one of the important media. Howard Goldblatt translated many Chinese novels, including a large number of Mo Yan's works. Mo Yan is the first Chinese Nobel Prize winner in literature. Many of Mo Yan's works are deeply rooted in the hearts of the people. *Frog* portrays a vivid image of a rural gynecologist. It has a strong Chinese cultural color, including a large number of culture-loaded words. The translation of culture-loaded words is very crucial for the spread of Chinese culture. Therefore, according to the classification of culture-loaded words, this paper analyzes the translation of culture-loaded words under different classifications from the perspective of domestication and foreignization. It is hoped that this paper can provide some reference for the translation of culture-loaded words.

2. The understanding of domestication and foreignization

Schleiermacher thinks there are two methods to translate. "Foreignization is an approach that the translator leaves the author in peace as much as possible; and moves the reader towards him" while domestication is the one that the translator "leaves the reader in peace as much as possible, and moves the author towards him" (Venuti, L., 2004). Domestication means to convey the content of the original text through the common expression of the target language readers with the purpose of the target language or the target language readers. Domestication translation helps readers better understand the translation and improve the accuracy and quality of the translation.

Foreignization, according to Venuti (Venuti, L. (ed.), 1998), "entails choosing a foreign text and developing a translation method along lines which are excluded by dominant cultural values in the target language". Foreignization means that the translator should try not to disturb the author and let the reader approach the author. The purpose of using foreignization is to consider the differences of different cultures, maintain and reflect the characteristics of foreign culture and language style, and deepen the feelings of foreign culture to the target readers.

3. Translation strategy analysis

The culture loaded words in this paper are divided into five categories: linguistic culture-loaded words, social culture-loaded words, ecological culture-loaded words, material culture-loaded words, religious culture-loaded words (Wang Minfei, 2017). The author analyzes the translation strategies of these five main culture-loaded words based on the theory of domestication and foreignization.

3.1 Linguistic culture-loaded words

Example 1:

Source Text: wo ba ta de hua xiang gu gu zhuan shu hou, gu gu xing yan yuan zheng, yin ya dun cuo de shuo: zong you yi tian, wo yao qin shou qiao le ni zhe ge za zhong! (Mo Yan, 2012)

Target Text: When I repeated his story to Gugu, her eyes grew wide and she gnashed her silver teeth. One of these days, she said, I'm going to cut that bastard's balls off! (Goldblatt, 2014)

"za zhong" is one of the dialects commonly used to swear when quarreling with others. It is derogatory. "Bastard" is used to describe some people who have performed very badly. Gugu has a bad relationship with Xiao Shangchun. Xiao Shangchun gloated about Grandpa's sacrifice. When "I" told this to Gugu, she was very angry. The dialect "za zhong" is used to express dissatisfaction with Xiao Shangchun. Therefore, the translator here adopts foreignization. He uses words with the same meaning to convey the intention of the original work and express Gugu's mood at this moment.

Example 2:

Source Text: xiao shi zi jia gei ni, na jiao zuo "laing qin ze mu er qi" (Mo Yan, 2012).

Target Text: If she married you, it would be a case of 'the firebird knows which perch to choose' (Goldblatt, 2014).

"laing qin ze mu er qi" here is used to express that Little lion married the right man. Goldblatt adopts foreignization to remain the image. He uses literal translation to vividly restore this proverb, so that readers can better feel the Chinese culture. However, the author believes that it is also possible to combine domestication with foreignization, on the basis of which, the connotation of this sentence can be added. Through this way, the cultural meaning is preserved. Readers can also feel easy to understand.

Example 3:

Source Text: dang nian ta shang wei xiao shi, hai shi wo zhao wei sheng ju shen ju zhang shuo le qing, ke ta "yi zhao quan zai shou, fan lian bu ren ren" (Mo Yan, 2012).

Target Text: He was admitted into the school thanks to my personal recommendation to Director Shen of the Bureau of Health. Only to be ignored by him when he was the man in charge. (Goldblatt, 2014)

Gugu said "Huangjun" had power and ignored others when he became the dean. At that time, Gugu helped him. Goldblatt adopts domestication to express the meaning directly. The reader can feel easy to understand it.

3.2 Social culture-loaded words

Example 4:

Source Text: yin wei jia li ke ren duo, qi da gu ba da yi ben jia de shen zi da niang dou yao lai chi fan, suo yi tang wu li na laing ge guo zao yi zhi zai shao huo, zhen man tou chao cai zhu mian tiao, ba kang xi dou kuai kao hu le (Mo Yan, 2012).

Target Text: All the aunts and grannies in the family were expecting to eat, so the stove never had a chance to cool down – steaming buns, stir frying vegetables, boiling noodles – until the bed mat nearly melted. (Goldblatt, 2014)

"qi da gu ba da yi " in Chinese means that there are many relatives. Here Goldblatt uses foreignization to retain the two titles of aunt and grannies, trying to convey the meaning of the original while also clearly expressing the meaning of the original.

Example 5:

Source Text: ta de tou fa yi ran Zhong fen zhe, xiang na xie dian ying li chang jian de "wu si" qing nian. Sheng xia de tian qi, ta yi ran chuan zhe n a shen hou hua da ni de lan se xue sheng zhi fu, kou dai li yi ran cha zhe liang zhi bi-yi zhi gang bi yi zhi shuang se yuan zhu bi-ta de lian se si hu bi wo shang ci jian shi hei le yi xie (Mo Yan, 2012).

Target Text: His hair was parted down the middle, like the young men in movies set in the May Fourth period, and even in the dog days of summer he wore his blue gabardine student uniform, still with two pens in the breast pocket: a fountain pen and a two-colour ballpoint pen. His face seemed darker than the last time I'd seen him (Goldblatt, 2014).

Goldblatt adopts foreignization to directly translate it into "the young men in the May Fourth period", retaining the cultural background features of the original text, in order that readers can understand the historical elements.

Example 6:

Source Text: wo you ran yi qi, hai tis hi qi, qin yan mu du, xian yi zhong hong wei bing "po si jiu" zhan dou yaun, zhuan cheng qian lai chai miao hui shen de qing jing (Mo Yan, 2012).

Target Text: I was reminded of that time in my childhood when with my own eyes I watched the 'Down with the Four Olds' struggle corps of the Number One County High School Red Guard faction come to tear down temples and destroy idols (Goldblatt, 2014).

Goldblatt adopts foreignization to directly translate "si jiu" into "the Four Olds". "po si jiu" means breaking old ideas, old culture, old customs and old habits. The translation here makes it impossible for readers who do not know Chinese history to understand its connotation. The author believes that the strategy of combining domestication with foreignization can also be used here to translate the connotation of the "four old" to help readers understand cultural differences.

3.3 Ecological culture-loaded words

Example 7:

Source Text: xu si ling he li zheng wei lian ming xie xin gei shan gu, nu chi ta shi ge xiao ren. xin zhong shuo shuo ru guo ta gan shang wan liu fu san wei qin ren yi gen hao mao, jiao dong jun qu jiang ji he quan bu bing li gong da ping du cheng (Mo Yan, 2012).

Target Text: Commander Xu and Commissar Li wrote a joint letter to Sugitani, denouncing him as a petty man and threatening to throw the entire weight of the Shandong Eighth Route Army against him if he harmed a hair of any of the three members of Wan Liufu's family (Goldblatt, 2014).

Here, "jiao dong" is also called "Shandong", which is one of thirty-four administrative regions in China. The original author in the whole source text uses "jiao dong" instead of "shan dong" to make the language conform to that period. However, in order to make the target language more acceptable, Goldblatt adopts the method of foreignization, translating "jiao dong" into "Shandong" without using domestication translating it into "an American place". Meanwhile, the translation of "Shandong" retains the cultural charm of the original text, and based on the background that "Shandong is one of China's provinces and cities", it is easier to understand than "Jiaodong".

Example 8:

Source Text: gu gu yi ting dao xiao shang chun de ming zi. lian se jiu bian le, ya zhe ya gen shuo: zhe ge huai Zhong, zao jiu gai tian da wu lei hong, ke ta yi zhi huo de hao hao de, mei ri li chi xiang de he la de, shen ti jian zhuang de xiang tou gong niu, ke jian lian lao tian ye ye ju pa e gun (Mo Yan, 2012)!

Target Text: Gugu's face darkened when she heard the name Xiao Shangchun. That evil man, she said through clenched teeth, deserves to be struck by lightning. But no, he lives the good life, with fine food and drink. He's healthy as an ox, which just goes to show that even the heavens are afraid of that louse (Goldblatt, 2014).

Goldblatt adopts foreignization to retain the lightning. The image is retained, but the reader may be feeling confused. The translator tries his best to retain cultural images in order to spread culture. The author believes that the combination of domestication and foreignization can also be used here to express the deep meaning of the original text. Meanwhile, Gugu's dislike of Xiao shangchun can also be expressed more clearly.

Example 9:

Source Text: wo bu pa! wo shi tai shan ding shang yi qing song, kang yan han dou feng xue xiong you zhao yang (Mo Yan, 2012)!

Target Text: That doesn't scare me. I'm like a pine tree atop Mount Tai, fighting the bitter cold and warding off the wind and snow (Goldblatt, 2014).

Mount Tai is a famous scenic spot in China. Goldblatt adopts foreignization to translate it into "Mount Tai" directly.

It retains the name of the scenic spot with Chinese characteristics, arousing readers' imagination, so as to deeply understand Mount Tai and Chinese culture.

3.4 Material culture-loaded words

Example 10:

Source Text: yi jin men jiu shi guo zao, guo zao hou shi yi du er chi gao de jian bi qiang, qiang hou jiu shit u kang (Mo Yan, 2012).

Target Text: The first thing you encountered after entering was the stove, which was backed by a two-foot-high wall. The sleeping platform, the kang, was behind that low wall (Goldblatt, 2014).

In order to distinguish it from ordinary beds, the translator here adopts foreignization translation, directly retaining the image of "heatable brick bed" and directly translating it into "Kang", so that readers can understand the different Chinese culture.

Example 11:

Source Text: jia zhang men kan zhe na xie jin huang se de dou you, nian zhe san fa chu you mo xiang qi de bu piao, yi ge ge yan jing chao shi, xin huai gan ji (Mo Yan, 2012).

Target Text: The receivers' eyes would be moist and their hearts would swell as they gazed upon the gold-coloured oil and the cotton coupons, printed with sweet-smelling ink (Goldblatt, 2014).

"bu piao" appeared in the social background at that time and were also unique to China. The translator uses domestication here to translate it into "coupons". A coupon is a piece of printed paper that you can use it to pay less money than usual to buy a product, or to get it free. Domestication is used here to avoid readers' incomprehension due to cultural differences and increase their reading interest.

3.5 Religious culture-loaded words

Example 12:

Source Text: xiao shang chun xia ling, ba "niu gui she shen" ya xia qu, zhi liu wo gu gu zai tai shang (Mo Yan, 2012).

Xiao Shangchun ordered his men to take all the other ox-ghosts and snake-demons off the stage and leave Gugu alone up there (Goldblatt, 2014).

"niu gui she shen" is a metaphor for all kinds of bad guys. This culture-loaded word is originally a Buddhist term and then becomes a fixed idiom to describe counter revolutionaries during the Cultural Revolution. Here Goldblatt adopts the combination of domestication and foreignization. Foreignization is used to retain the image of "ox, ghosts and snake", and domestication is used to translate it into two words: "evil and demons". In this way, readers can not only understand the original culture, but also intuitively understand that the real meaning conveyed by these images is evil creatures.

Example 13:

Source Text: song zi niang niang de yi zhang zai guang chang shang xun xing yi quan, ting zai zhong yang, pai cheng zhen shi (Mo Yan, 2012).

Target Text: After being carried around the square, the goddess's flags lined up in formation in the centre (Goldblatt, 2014).

"song zi niang niang" is the god in charge of giving birth in Chinese folk religious beliefs. "Goddess" means a female deity. Goldblatt adopts the strategy of domestication. Due to the different religious beliefs between China and the West, the translator chooses the word "goddess" acceptable to the Western culture, which not only expresses the meaning of the original text, but also respects the cultural beliefs of the readers.

4. Conclusion

To sum up, Howard Goldblatt uses the foreignization translation method as much as possible to retain the cultural image of the original text, so as to achieve the purpose of cultural exchange when translating these culture-loaded words. However, when some target language readers cannot understand it, Howard Goldblatt will consider using the strategy of domestication. At the same time, Howard Goldblatt also uses the method of combining domestication and foreignization. In short, Howard Goldblatt considered many factors in his translation, but all showed great respect for the original. The author believes that behind this successful translation is not only Howard Goldblatt's accurate grasp of Chinese language and culture, but also his in-depth understanding of Mo Yan's feelings, feelings and subjective intention as a translator. In the specific translation, Howard Goldblatt fully considers the cultural background and acceptance ability of American readers, and realizes the perfect combination of the original content and the translated language, so that

readers will not have a strong sense of strangeness when accepting Mo Yan's works. In addition, the author suggests that in the future, translators can combine domestication and foreignization to make translations perfectly. In this way, we can achieve the dual purpose of cultural communication and the acceptance of the works by the target language readers.

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