

# *Research on the Translatability of the Style of Lin Yutang's The Gay Genius*

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**Abstract:** This paper takes Lin Yutang's *The Gay Genius: The Life and Times of Su Tungpo* as the research object. Guided by Liu Miqing's style translation, translation aesthetics, and translation reception, it takes Zhang Zhenyu's translation in 2017 as an example and analyzes the level of style reproduction in the translation compared with the source text, so as to explore the translatability of the style of *The Gay Genius*. The conclusion is that the style of *The Gay Genius* is highly translatable. With the improvement of the translator's language conversion skills and cultural coordination ability and the development of modern translation theories, its translation can be more perfect. In addition, this paper raises and discusses the issues related to translatability. Based on existing research, it further explains the translatability limits of the original work and the relationship between the translator's language style and the work's translatability.

**Keywords:** style translation, *The Gay Genius*, translatability

## 1. Introduction

The limitations and creativity of style translation have brought about problems of various translation methods, targets, and limits that the translators have faced so far. Lin Yutang's *The Gay Genius* is a literary work that spreads Chinese culture to the West. Exploring the translatability of its style can comprehensively find out the value conversion between English and Chinese and achieve the purpose of maintaining the original content and style. Through analyzing the use of translation strategies and their effects, this paper discusses the guiding role of the above three theories in style translation, and deeply explores the literary value of the translated version of *The Gay Genius* to provide reference for the translation of this work.

## 2. The Gay Genius

*The Gay Genius* is a biographical work, divided into four volumes: childhood and youth, adulthood, seniority, and exile [1]. After re-studying Su Dongpo's works and a large number of historical facts, the author wrote the important activities and environment of the Northern Song literati, highlighting his characteristics and later influences. The background of the work is based on the literati's mindset of cherishing talents throughout the ages. While admiring the amazing talents of Su Dongpo, Lin Yutang was more impressed by his upright and broad-minded temperament, so he hoped Su Dongpo could long last in the world's memory. *The Gay Genius* combines the traditional record, historical

biography, and fictional narrative techniques, providing a reference for the creation of biographical literature.

### **3. Theoretical Basis**

#### **3.1. The Style Translation**

The style translation proposed by Liu Miqing focuses on the expression of style of the original language, and the "adaptability" of the style of translation to the original text is obtained on the basis of analyzing the meaning [2]. This theory explores not only the means of expressing the style, but also how to make the translation "appropriate" to the greatest extent in the corresponding process with the original language. Therefore, the translation style needs to have a relative dependence on the original style. In the initial stage, this dependence cannot be removed. From the perspective of recipients, style translation is a perceptual aesthetic experience delivered to the reader. From the perspective of the translator, style translation is a collection of multiple writing concepts, including the wording and sentence creation of the work, the author's thoughts and emotions, and the process of reconstructing the artistic appeal of a work in another language and culture. Also, style translation has a certain degree of originality. Translators should not simply interpret "faithfulness" as the equivalent meanings of words and sentences. In addition, they must grasp the translatability of its deep connotation and aesthetic effects from the perspective of the original work as a whole.

#### **3.2. Translation Aesthetics**

Liu Miqing believes that based on the high sensibility of Chinese, the content of translation aesthetics is mainly to use the basic principles of modern aesthetics to analyze, explain, and solve aesthetic problems in interlingual conversion, including the study of aesthetic objects, aesthetic subjects, language aesthetics, and reception theory, the study of general laws of aesthetic psychological activities (such as imagery, emotion, etc.), and the discussion of the aesthetic representation methods and the aesthetic values of translation [2]. Translation studies from an aesthetic perspective are of special significance to the development of Chinese translation theories.

#### **3.3. Translation Reception**

The reception theory is a set of value orientation theories about reception in the development of reception aesthetics in Europe. Literary works, in the eyes of receptionists, are a kind of "social and cultural symbols", and their duty is to communicate and transfer between writers and society, and between writers and history. Therefore, literature and textual research should not only center on writers. The art of literature should refer to the social aesthetic orientation, which is the orientation of recipients (readers). On this basis, Liu Miqing proposed that readers actually participate in the construction of artistic values, and at the same time, the social responsibility of art must also ensure that readers participate in or even upgrade this construction [2]. These basic viewpoints of reception aesthetics have obvious referential significance for translation studies. Therefore, translation studies can use reception aesthetics to establish its own reception theory and apply it in practice.

#### **3.4. Translatability**

Liu Miqing believes that the basis for the translatability of style can be summarized into the following four points: (1) Most stylistic markers can be converted. Words, syntax, rhetorical marks and other expressions can find corresponding statements in language conversion. In addition to direct translation, translators can also resolve differences between different languages through free translation, transliteration, paraphrase, and other methods. (2) Human language has the emotive

function. Readers can generate spontaneous understanding and emotions based on the text itself. Readers under different cultural, social, and academic backgrounds can sense different levels of meanings. Therefore, the effectiveness of style translation also has a certain degree of dependence on the receiving group's own language perception. (3) Translation of style has a great relationship with the translator's language conversion skills and talents. The translator is responsible for identifying, appreciating, and researching the writing style of the original work and even the author, applying translation skills and aesthetics to the interpretation of the style, and avoiding one-sided attribution of the lack of aesthetic restoration to "translatability limits". (4) The study of style translation is becoming more scientific and systematic. Under the guidance of modern science and linguistics, the theoretical foundation and practical application of stylistics are constantly expanding its guiding role in the field of translation [2].

#### 4. Literature Review

Research on *The Gay Genius* from the perspective of translation contains analysis of the translation strategies used in the work. Zhou Zhihui and Gu Yi discussed Lin Yutang's translation behavior in *The Gay Genius* based on memetics, and analyzed his choice of translation strategies and methods [3]. Guided by the three principles of the Skopos theory, Ren Lixin deeply researched into the back-translation strategies used in Lin Yutang's foreign language writing from the translation of culturally loaded words and sentence structure [4]. Based on Toury's theory of translation norms, Zhang Jianli explored the reflection and influence of various norms in the process of translation and introduction combined with poem translation in *The Gay Genius*, and summarized the characteristics of Lin Yutang's translation of poems [5].

In addition, some studies analyze the translation concepts in *The Gay Genius* from the perspective of cultural communication and give translation guidance for similar works. From the perspective of cross-cultural communication, Wang Zhe analyzed Lin Yutang's translation strategy of combining domestication and foreignization in the translation of culture-loaded words, confirming the effective success of *The Gay Genius* in spreading Chinese culture [6]. Wei Guorong and Zhang Qi studied Lin Yutang's translation methods of Chinese culture-loaded words, and provided inspiration for the translation practice and cultural exchanges of Chinese and English works [7]. From the perspective of readers' consciousness, Luan Xuemei and Bian Jianhua analyzed the manifestation and dissemination effect of the textless back-translation while creating works on Chinese cultural subjects in English, thus summarizing the factors influencing the broadening of the audience of Chinese literature [8]. Teng Wenna took the subjectivity of the translator as the perspective, and analyzed Lin Yutang's achievements and contributions as an author and translator to achieve the purpose of cross-cultural communication in text expression and translation strategies [9].

Regarding the biographical literary form, there are comparative studies conducted on the translations of *The Gay Genius*. Shi Jiangang and Shao Bin compared original work with Zhang Zhenyu's translation from the perspective of corpus linguistics, and concluded the existence of translation commonality assumptions and the vulnerability of Chinese translation to source language penetration, narrative perspective, and translator's style [10]. Based on the cohesion theory, Teng Mei and Qin Wei compared the handling of anaphoric cohesion in two Chinese translations of *The Gay Genius*, and explained the importance of ensuring the coherence of the text in target language to provide high-quality translations [11]. From the perspective of semantic equivalence, Shi Xiaolei made an in-depth comparison of the translations of Song Biyun and Zhang Zhenyu and gave insights into the translation of historical biographies guided by Nida's "functional equivalence" theory [12]. Liu Wanting used two Chinese translations of *The Gay Genius* as examples to analyze and explore the ways in which translators strived to achieve "equivalent translation" in the translation process, and to better implement faithfulness and improve translation strategies [13].

To sum up, the current researches on *The Gay Genius* mainly focus on the author's translation strategies, its cultural communication functions, and the comparison of translations. There is less research on the translation of the style of the work. Therefore, this paper will use the theory of style translation as a guide to deeply analyze the translatability of the style of *The Gay Genius*.

## 5. Analysis of the Style Translation of *The Gay Genius*

Based on Liu Miqing's style translation theory, methods of translating styles are mainly divided into corresponding, recasting, and decolouring of generalizing style conversion. Among them, the style conversion adopted by *The Gay Genius* is mainly corresponding and reconstructive. Focusing on these two conversion styles, this paper will combine translation aesthetics and reception translation to analyze the style translation strategies and translation effects of the Zhang Zhenyu's translation in detail and conclude the degree of "adaptability" of the translation's style to the original style, in order to explain the translatability of the style of the original work [1].

### 5.1. Corresponding Style Conversion—imitation

Imitation has the broadest and most practical significance in style translation. It can structurally ensure the adaptability of the translation to the original text and its ability to transform. In this process, the translator should try to fit the formal notation system of the original work, grasp the expression of style symbols in terms of phonology, register, syntax, vocabulary, grammar, rhetoric, etc., and imitate the original style with the language system of the "target language", so as to achieve structural and semantic style conversion.

Example 1: *The Gay Genius (Book One)* Preface (pp.9-15)

Source text: The maximum span of human life was only "36,000 days", but that was long enough; if his search for the elixir of immortality was in vain, still every moment of life was good while it lasted. His body might die, but his spirit in the next incarnation might become a star in heaven, or a river on earth, to shine, to nourish, and to sustain all living. Of this living, he was only a particle in a temporary manifestation of the eternal, and it really did not matter very much which particle he happened to be.

Translation: 人生最长也不过三万六千日，但是那已然够长了；即使他追寻长生不死的仙丹妙药终成泡影，人生的每一刹那，只要连绵不断，也就美好可喜了。他的肉体虽然会死，他的精神在下一辈子，则可成为天空的星、地上的河，可以闪亮照明，可以滋润营养，因而维持众生万物。这一生，他只是永恒在刹那显现间的一个微粒，他究竟是哪一个微粒，又何关乎重要？

Su Shi's literary attainments were quite high but had bumpy experience in his career. When narrating his life experience, it is inevitable to mention his great number of poems, lyrics, promotion, and resignation. In order to explain the proper nouns in a specific era, the modern language register obviously cannot bring readers a complete, accurate, and natural aesthetic experience. Therefore, combining the classical Chinese register can help readers more distinctly perceive the image of Su Shi and feel the social environment at that time. The register is thus in harmony with the biographical content. This language style is reflected in the translation of the whole book.

The lexical choice is the most basic for the expression of style. The vocabulary of the original work is concise and vivid, the wording and sentence formation is rich in philosophy, and the metaphors are straightforward, without cumbersome conversion. The words used in the translation retain the adjectives, adverbs, euphemistic particles, and special images of the original text. Four-character words are often used to highlight the unique literary nature of Chinese characters. For example, "the elixir of immortality" is translated as "长生不死的仙丹妙药", and "in vain" is

translated as "终成泡影"; "might" is replaced by a related word in Chinese; "body" and "spirit", and "eternal" and "temporary" are in contrast, giving people the feeling of staring at the protagonist from multiple angles.

In terms of rhetoric, the translation of this paragraph retains many rhetorical techniques in the original text. For example, it uses metaphors and compares “星 (stars)”, “河 (rivers)”, and “微粒 (particles)” to the spirit of Su Shi, expressing his exquisite and far-reaching enlightenment to guide the thinking of later generations. “天空的星闪亮照明、地上的河滋润营养”. Pairing conveys the meaning of the original text and enhances the phonological beauty of the translation. It also uses climax “可以...可以...因而...”, taking the important role of the stars and rivers in human life as an implication of the contribution of Su Shi’s thoughts to the development of human society.

Example 2: *The Gay Genius (Book One)* Chapter 5 (pp.98-99 and pp.110-111)

Source text: Now and then they sailed past lone cottages, and saw, silhouetted high up against the sky, some country lads cutting wood. The bare huts of the cottagers bore witness to their extreme poverty; their roofs were made of wooden boards, without tiles. As Su was reflecting on the toil of human life, his attention was arrested by a gray falcon circling at ease and in freedom in the sky without a thought for the morrow, and he wondered whether the honors and emoluments of office were worth the fetters of a civilized life. The falcon became a symbol of the emancipated human spirit.

Translation: 偶尔他们的船驶过一个孤立的茅屋，只见那茅屋高高在上侧身而立，背负青天，有时看见樵夫砍柴。看那茅屋孤零零立在那里，足可证明居住的人必然是赤贫无疑，小屋顶仅仅盖着木板，并无瓦片覆盖。苏东坡正在思索人生的劳苦，忽然瞥见一只苍鹰在天空盘旋得那么悠然自在，似乎丝毫不为明天费一些心思，于是自己盘算，为了功名利禄而使文明的生活受到桎梏镣铐的夹锁，是否值得？在高空飘逸飞翔的苍鹰正好是人类精神解脱后的象征。

From the perspective of phonology, the lexical choice in the original text is concise and easy to understand. In the translation, conjuncts and adjectives such as “高高在上...背负青天” are added in many places to enrich the tone pattern of the translation and enhance the sense of ambiguity of the sentence. “仅仅盖着木板，并无瓦片覆盖” starts with the falling tone and ends with the checked tone. It uses verbs to give full play to the musical and substantive sense of the four tones of Chinese. It not only conveys the original statement of the house structure, but also reveals the sadness and loss of the word “without” at the end of the sentence. Because all Chinese characters are monosyllabic, the pronunciation appears pure and clear, and the emotions contained in the original conjunctions can also be fully conveyed. For example, “只见” implies curiosity and inquiry; “必然” implies conjecture and conviction; “忽然” has the meaning of surprise and abruptness. For such meanings, “and” and “as” in English are enough to cover, but readers need to realize it by themselves. Zhang's translation deeply examines the emotional changes in the author's writing and conveys the implicit meaning of the original work with the context.

In terms of syntax, the original text mostly uses subordination. Taking this paragraph as an example. Except for the last sentence, the rest are clauses of supplementary explanations or subjective inferences following the main sentence. Coordinate sentences are translated synonymously such as “at ease and in freedom” and “悠然自在”. “And he wondered whether...” is intended to compare and choose between “盘旋得悠然自在” and “为功名忍受桎梏的枷锁”. The use of parallel sentences is reflected in the end. With “falcon” as a symbol of the spirit of freedom, what is implicit is the thinking and answer to the question in the previous sentence – they were not worth at all.

## 5.2. Recasting Style Conversion—recreation of the Style

Liu Miqing pointed out that the main situation for choosing this method are the target language lacking a style symbol system corresponding to the source language, time and space differences between the source text and the target language, the needs of communicative function and utility, language and cultural differences, etc.

*The Gay Genius* covers a large number of contents in classical Chinese which Lin Yutang has translated into English while writing. Therefore, when translating certain poems and letters in the source text back to Chinese, the translator can refer to the existing ancient classics to achieve maximum restoration and reappearance and not be limited to temporal changes or social development. There are many examples in the source text, such as the following two articles.

Example 3: *The Gay Genius (Book Three)* Chapter 17: “The Red Cliff” on Page 480

Source text: Oars of cassia and sculls of the fragrant lan

Strike at the gleaming surface;

Follow the stream of light.

My heart wanders in the gloaming,

Thinking of the fair one far away.”

Translation: 桂棹兮兰桨，击空明兮溯流光。渺渺兮余怀，望美人兮天一方。

Example 4: *The Gay Genius (Book Three)* Chapter 17: “A Letter to Li Chang” on Page 513

Source text: “I am approaching the age of fifty and am beginning to try to save up something. I suppose it is mostly plain stinginess and that I am rationalizing it by the beautiful word 'thrift'.”

Translation: 仆行年五十，始知作活。大要是慳尔，而文以美名，谓之“俭素”。

In addition to such poems and letters, some specific events, titles, and allusions described in the text are rooted in traditional Chinese culture, such as "make a count – 封侯爵", "usurp the throne – 僭取帝位", "take a ceremonial bath – 斋戒沐浴", "the fall of the imperial house – 朝代覆亡", "locked up for the night – 锁禁深夜". According to this characteristic, translators who want to recast the language style of classical Chinese can start from the meaning of contents to break through the objective differences and barriers between the two languages, and achieve a high level of acceptance by readers of the target language. Even if there are popular Western metaphors such as "lawyer", Chinese readers can fully understand its meaning in modern society.

From the perspective of the whole work, Lin Yutang's writing follows the historical trend and the work is within a limited range around the protagonist. From "writing ancient events of ancient people", the narration of the timeline and the protagonist is objective and accurate. As for specific scenes in the experience, there will be logical imagination to broaden the reader's vision of the ancient, so that the work itself tends to be a literary work rather than a collection of historical materials. Zhang's translation puts the thoughts and comments in the text into classical Chinese, and carries out a unified style conversion to alleviate the sense of conflict caused by language differences in different eras.

## 5.3. Translation Aesthetics—Aesthetic Meaning and Regulation of Translation

Based on Liu Miqing's *Introduction to Translation Aesthetics*, in any case, interlingual aesthetic conversion will be and must be implemented in meaning, so as to grasp the language style of the source text from the beginning. Therefore, translators need to meet two requirements [2].

First is to accurately grasp the meaning and connotation of each word used in the source language. The meaning of words in the English is rich and changeable, and the translation methods and selection of words of different subjects and contexts need to be comprehensively and accurately considered. *The Gay Genius* uses simple and popular vocabulary, and the phrase collocation and grammatical structure are not overly gorgeous and complicated. Although some of the words used are culturally

different, the translator is basically able to make appropriate conversions in Chinese and Western contexts, such as "secretary – 翰林学士" and "petty courtier – 小人 (subordinates)". Lin Yutang's self-translated vocabulary can also find the corresponding proper nouns in Chinese, such as "Taoist Temple – 道士庙"; "Pan chi – 蟠溪". The more difficult part lies in the translation of the dialogue. When narrating the dialogue, Lin Yutang not only referred to the original words in classical Chinese, but also added a lot of possible emotions and subjective cognition, which made the work contain many sounds, idioms, and allusions used by the ancients. Under this situation, the complexity of the selection of words and the depth of the textual research require a higher level of language skills and literary quality of the translator.

Second is to promote the conceptual meaning of the target language to an aesthetic meaning, and advance conceptual presentation to aesthetic presentation. The translation must not only "express the meaning", but also "express the connotation". *The Gay Genius* has a strong poetic flavor of Chinese classical literature in content. Combined with the background of the protagonist, it is completely feasible for the translator to choose a translation strategy of mixing classical Chinese and vernacular. The use of a large number of idioms and four-character words such as "vicissitudes of fortune – 荣枯盛衰" and "leave everything to Heaven's will – 付诸天命" is more suitable for the narrative context, adding imagination, association, and empathy to the translation, so as to portray Su Dongpo's drifting fate and broad-mindedness. At the same time, it conveys the author's praise and admiration to the protagonist's "immortal art and personality", making the translation have a better combination of the form and content.

Example 6: *The Gay Genius (Book Four)*: Chapter 26 (pp.745-756)

Source text: He called for the blessing of the gods and prayed that the farmers' granaries might always be full and there might be no storms upon the seas.

Translation: 他祈求上苍降福, 祈求农民粮食满仓, 祈求海上风平浪静。

If only to convey the meaning, the translation would be "他呼吁上帝的祝福, 祈祷农民的粮仓永远充实、海上没有暴风雨". The translator removes the conjunctions in English sentence pattern and makes full use of the concise, profound, and phonological features of Chinese characters. Three identical verbs are repeatedly used to emphasize Su Dongpo's earnest plea for the well-being of the people, highlighting the passionate anticipation in original expression. Its meaning is well preserved in the Chinese context, which promotes the aesthetic presentation and allows readers to feel the greatness of the protagonist.

On this basis, Liu Miqing proposed that translation could use aesthetic regulation to manipulate the fluidity of the aesthetic expression of meaning. The three factors that enhance this fluidity are context, style, and emotion [2].

The beauty of words in the context should first follow the basic principles of fluency and naturalness. The use of words and syntax should be improved after clearly expressing the meaning in order to achieve aesthetic harmony and balance. The language in *The Gay Genius* is simple but meaningful. Zhang Zhenyu's translation is generally accurate, profound, and beautiful. However, as it blends classical Chinese with the vernacular, there are many linguistic disorders from a modern perspective. For example, it is said on Page 7 "因为他们没能清还硬逼他们向官家借的款项与利息". "硬逼他们" is repetitive and lengthy in the sentence. The subject of this action should be added, or this phrase should be simplified as "被迫". On Page 10, "杰作之所以成为杰作, 就因为历代的读者都认为'好作品'就是那个样子". "之所以...就因为..." is semantic repetition. "因为" in the original sentence should be replaced with "在于".

*The Gay Genius* is a biography. Its language style is similar to prose, with narration and discussion, which is informal. In order to facilitate Western readers to better understand Chinese culture, the lexical choice in the original work is concise and simple, with rich but not obscure meaning. The

language density of the work is moderate, and it is not hard to read. Zhang Zhenyu's translation is obviously formal, which is mainly manifested in the use of more rhetorical techniques and the style of wording and sentence making in classical Chinese. If the aesthetic performance of the translation could be changed, the proportion of vernacular should be increased, using a more plain and straightforward narrative method to make the language more like prose and reduce the complexity and rigidity of the classical sentence pattern. Taking this sentence as an example, "Gazing up from the boat, the travelers could see only a tiny ribbon of blue which was the sky" is translated into "自船面仰望，只见一条细蓝，望之如带，那正是天空". Obviously, the translation emphasizes the simplicity and beauty of Chinese, omitting the subject of the source text and adding a metaphor. To make the translation more faithful to the source text, it can be translated as "旅者若自船面仰望，只能看见一条蓝色的色带，那正是天空".

In order to better convey the emotion and express the deep connotation of the source text, the translator can realize "empathy conversion" through imagination. Lin Yutang used his imagination in many chapters of *The Gay Genius*. When describing the experiences and feelings of historical figures, the translator's personal experience is often used to fill in the vacancies of history reasonably to enhance the interestingness and readability of biographical literature. For example, Chapter 5 describes the fragment of Su Dongpo sailing through the Three Gorges. It is obvious that the author can only know the scenery and emotions that Su Dongpo has actually experienced in his poems and lyrics. The specific image of the hut along the way, the activities of the woodcutter, the color of the sky at that time, etc. can only be described in detail through imagination. It is also an imagination for the translator to choose a proper vehicle. For example, in Chapter 20 "the human being occupies but a small and transitory part" is translated into "人只不善沧海之一粟，浮光掠影而已". The original text aims to express the insignificance and transientness of human existence. The translator flexibly chose the metaphor of "寄蜉蝣于天地，渺沧海之一粟" in Su Dongpo's poem, which not only accurately translated the meaning of the source text, but also contained the author's approval of the philosophical idea of the unity of man and nature, and his praise to the harmony of the life cycle.

#### 5.4. Translation Reception—basic Value Appeal of Reader Reception

Liu Miqing believes that the recipient's orientation is of great significance to the aesthetic orientation and the reception aesthetics of translation. Therefore, the translation of style should refer to the influence of the original work on the reader, and the reader's acceptance of the original content and culture. The value standard of translation reception is largely derived from the basic value appeal of reader's reception [2].

First, great importance must be attached to the conceptual transformation and aesthetic transformation of meaning. Translation reception has a high demand for the accurate conversion of meaning and its aesthetic performance. The recipient group of the translation of *The Gay Genius* is Chinese readers. Thus, the translator should strictly manage the words used in translation to correspond with the meaning of the source language and conform to the historical background of the work. Here are some examples for the identification and definition of these two levels of meaning conversion.

##### (1) Combination of conceptual and aesthetic meaning

Example 7: *The Gay Genius (Book Two)* Chapter 6 pp.131-150

Source text: Often in an argument hot words were exchanged.

Translation: 二人之间遇有争论，便唇枪舌剑，恶语相加。

The source text uses inversion and passiveness, while the translator adds a subject and uses vivid idioms in the Chinese context. This not only accurately grasps the concepts of the original words and

sentences, but also retains the concise and vivid features of the English sentences. The alternate and back-and-forth meaning conveyed by the word "exchange" is restored, so that the meaning transmission and aesthetic transformation can be "clearly observed".

## (2) Distortion of conceptual and aesthetic meaning

Example 8: *The Gay Genius (Book One)* Chapter 3 pp.54-66

Source text: approximately in the state of mind of a hunter who had shot his last arrow and missed the deer, and it was as if he was refashioning new arrows and sending forth his sons to shoot that deer yet.

Translation: 其心情大概正如一个猎人射了最后一箭而未能将鹿射中, 仿佛搭上新箭, 令儿子再射一样。

"大概" and "正如" are semantically contradictory. The former is used for guessing and can be translated into "probably" in English. The latter has the meaning of exact, certain, and even equivalent, with a stronger tone, and can be translated into "just as" in English. According to the word "approximately" in the source text, the translation should be modified as "大概如同". "射了最后一箭" is ambiguous. The original meaning is to shoot the last arrow in the hand, that is, there is no remaining arrow after shooting. The "refashion" below refers to re-production. However, the translation may have another interpretation that the hunter shoots arrows "the last time", emphasizing the number of times rather than the number of arrows. "搭上新箭" also has the ambiguity of using the remaining arrows, and the meaning is not accurate. In addition, the phrase "as if" in the original text corresponds to "approximately" to provide a supplementary explanation of the meaning of the sentence. "仿佛" in the second clause of the translation seems to correspond to the phrase "as if" in the original text, but it can be omitted in Chinese to make the sentence smooth and natural as a whole. When dealing with long sentences, the translator's mixed linguistic habits will reduce the aesthetic conversion that the recipient can perceive to a certain extent.

Second is the aesthetic standards of the language of translation. Linguistic beauty is an important criterion for translation reception. The background, logic, emotion, and context of the source text can all restrict translation. The translator's language performance must follow the following three requirements.

(1) Use appropriate words. The proper lexical choice in the translation refers to its closeness to the source language and suitability to the target language. It has a high degree of dependence on both languages in terms of content and form. Translators should avoid rough cuts, exaggeration, or unnecessary pretentiousness. For example, "fail all candidates who indulged in pedantic nonsense" is translated into "把只沉溺于雕琢文句卖弄辞藻的华美靡丽之文的学子, 全不录取". As for the translation alone, the phrase "雕琢文句" is not negative and even often means to praise, which is used to describe the pursuit of meticulous and skillful articles, but "卖弄辞藻" indicates redundancy and disdain. The word "华美" is often used to admire and praise, but "靡丽" has the derogatory meaning of extravagance and over-modification, which can be translated into "extravagant" in English. Putting two pairs of words with opposite meanings as coordinating adjectives in a sentence not only creates contradiction, but also makes the sentence too long and difficult to read. In addition, the sentence pattern of "把...不录取" is abrupt and the translation of this sentence may be modified to "对沉溺于卖弄辞藻、文无实意的学子全部不予录取".

(2) Smooth in writing. That is to say, the article should be fluent and readable. The language in *The Gay Genius* is vivid and plain, with almost no obscure and esoteric vocabulary. As for the letters in classical Chinese, Lin Yutang skillfully used the concise and rich English conjunctions and naturally processed the pattern of long sentences, making it logical in sentences and segments, so that

the readers would not be obsessed with understanding. Taking Su Dongpo's letter to his brother Ziyong as an example, "Huichow is a small town, but they do kill one lamb a day. As this is intended for the rich, I dare not buy it in competition with the official families. So I ask the butcher only for the spine. There are little morsels of meat around the bones. I boil it in water and take it out and drain it while it is very hot; otherwise, the moisture will remain. Then I soak it in wine and sprinkle a little salt over it before broiling." is translated into "惠州市肆寥落，然日杀一羊。不敢与在官者争买，时嘱屠者，买其脊骨。骨间亦有微肉，煮熟热酒漉，随意用酒薄点盐炙，微焦食之。". As mentioned above, Zhang Zhenyu's translation has some flaws in its language style, grammatical structure, and interpretation of words. However, the whole translation is generally able to satisfy Chinese readers' understanding and aesthetic needs of the content.

(3) Proper innovation. The innovation in translation must abide by two principles, namely, not violating the meaning of the source text and conforming to Chinese norms. The translator can adjust, modify, and polish the form and meaning on the basis of the source text, and appropriately transform the culture in original language to the target language. Here, the word "appropriately" limits the degree of foreignization, that is, there should not be "translationese", which means excessive creation in the target language. The problems revealed by Zhang's translation in this regard are illustrated by the following simple examples. (a) Violation of original intent: "'乌台'是御史台监狱的名称". "乌台" should refer to "御史台", not "御史台监狱"; (b) The context mismatch: "建立孤儿院与医院，创监狱医师制度". In that context, the translation of "hospital" into "医院" obviously does not conform to the times, and should be "医馆"; (c) Mixed sentence patterns and repeated meaning: "何以...的缘故" "内容记载了..."; (d) Wrong coinage: "the idiotic boy emperor-童子帝王"; (e) Unclear reference: "我们不敢确言进入流传下来的这本书是完全根据陆游所见的那本手稿". The word "书" in the sentence refers to the history books written by Lu You, and the word "手稿" refers to the manuscript of Su Dongpo preserved by Zhang Quanzhen. The two are not the same item, and the translation should add "而写成的" at the end of the sentence.

Third is to attach great importance to the cultural interpretation and construction functions of translation. In translation reception, the translation is a unique medium with multi-dimensional services. The function of cultural transmission and interpretation is one of them. Regarding the translation reception of culture, the translator must abide by two principles.

(1) While translating into the target language culture, the translation should be striving to "Do as the Romans do". This standard requires translators not only to be proficient in the source language, but also to study the social culture of the target language carefully and understand its folk customs, rules, and regulations. Taking the following translations as examples, the translator fully explained the integration of Chinese and English language and culture.

Example 9: *The Gay Genius (Book Two)* Chapter 6 pp.127-144

Source text: As if in answer to the prayer, the showers came and spread all over the countryside.

Translation: 仿佛是有求必应，暴雨降落，乡间各地，普沾恩泽。

Four-character vocabulary is a unique way of coinage in Chinese culture, which can enrich the phonology of sentences and simplify the complex meaning without losing the linguistic beauty. The translator replaced the conjunction "and" in the second half of the sentence with a comma, inverted the subject and object, and combined the text above to supplement the meaning of "恩泽 (bounty)" implied in the source text, so that the disassembled components could follow the logic and maintain the previous sentence structure.

Example 10: *The Gay Genius (Book One)* Chapter 1 pp.12-27

Source text: it was writing that had brought him all his trouble.

Translation: 他一辈子都是以笔买祸。

In Chinese custom, the colloquial expression for a lifetime is "一辈子". "以笔买祸" vividly depicts the endless misfortunes caused by Su Dongpo's writing throughout his life. It uses a witty tone to illustrate that there comes trouble almost every time he writes. The word "买 (buy)" also conveys the self-deprecating and bitter feelings, and expresses the author's latent complaints against the society at that time.

(2) "Diversity and compatibility" should be the focus when translating into the target language. When introducing foreign cultures into China, the construction and prosperity of diverse culture should be considered. The particularity of *The Gay Genius* lies in the fact that the country of origin of culture is the same as the country of target language, so there is a solid cultural foundation, and the tolerance of the two languages and cultures is broader. Taking the above letter from Su Dongpo to his brother Ziyou as an example, the translator can directly refer to the ancient classics, so that the translation retains the original meaning and fully integrates the target language culture.

## 6. Discussion

### 6.1. The Translatability Limit of *The Gay Genius*

According to the analysis in this paper, the translation of *The Gay Genius* can use corresponding and reconstructive style conversion. Through the formal mark focusing on the variation of sound and form, its translatability can be guaranteed structurally. Translators need to choose semantically accurate and smooth expressions based on the lexical concept and connotation to adjust the expression of aesthetic meaning, so as to enhance the aesthetic value of the translation. At the same time, considering the value orientation of Chinese readers, the aesthetic standards of the target language should be composed of multiple dimensions such as wording, structure, and innovation, taking into account the conversion of concepts and aesthetic meanings, and exerting the effects of cultural communication and functional interpretation. *The Gay Genius* was based on the background of the Song Dynasty and was written in the 20th century, so there is a relatively large language span between modern English and ancient Chinese. The polysemy of English words makes it difficult for the conversion of corresponding words in Chinese to meet the requirements of "faithfulness, beauty, reception" and other aesthetic effects. From the perspective of phonetics, vocabulary, and grammar, the same rhetoric also has differences in expression in different languages. In order to reflect Chinese culture, the source text mostly uses paraphrase, using common words to explain the corresponding proper nouns. However, when faced with a large number of back-translations, it is difficult for the translator to fully restore Lin Yutang's easy-to-understand, plain, and vivid language style. For example, Zhang Zhenyu's translation pursues language coordination and consistency and adopts the combination of vernacular and classical Chinese. For the recipient, the overall difficulty of understanding has increased, and even problems such as grammatical errors and fuzzy logic may occur. Therefore, in terms of language, the translatability limit of *The Gay Genius* obviously exists.

On this basis, this paper further explores the cultural untranslatability of *The Gay Genius*, which mainly stems from the differences in the cultural background and traditional habits of Chinese and Western nations. The context and meaning of the source language may not exist in the target language. People in the society will have differences in the way of thinking, culture, and psychology, which will then be reflected in the way of language expression. When Lin Yutang wrote this biography, the content was based on Chinese culture, but the form, the language organization, was in pure English. For the translation of common literary works, the associative meaning and internal meaning of Chinese words, including idioms, allusions, diet, beliefs, etc., are difficult to find directly corresponding words in English expressions. Objective expressions such as person names and place names can almost only be translated through transliteration. The advantage of *The Gay Genius* lies in its high cultural translatability. Through a large amount of textual research in the back-translation

process, the translation can have the cultural meaning conversion that is highly in correspondence with the target language, and the limit of translatability can be greatly reduced. Wang Ying (2008) proposed some methods to deal with cultural "untranslatability", including (1) Literal translation. The cultural characteristics of the original words are retained, such as the name of the poem "The Song of the Yellow Mud Flat – 黄泥板词" and "The Red Cliff – 赤壁赋". (2) Free translation. The translation could completely use vocabulary with weaker cultural meaning to translate the information that the original text must convey, such as "become an immortal – 求道成仙" and "sit down in Taoist fashion – 盘膝打坐". (3) Transliteration. It is often used for relatively untranslatable caused by the vacancy of cultural vocabulary. Most of them are names of people and places, such as "Li Po – 李白", "Tu Fu – 杜甫", and "Fanshan Mountain – 矾山". (4) Add notes. When there is no perfect corresponding word, the source text can be further explained. This interpretation can make the abstract noun concretized, and the implicit meaning of the word can be clear. For example, "Perhaps one can become a fairy after all. The difficulty lies in forgetting human desires." is translated into "人也许可以成仙, 困难就在于难忘人欲耳。(神仙固有之, 难在忘势利)". (5) Substitution. On the basis of preserving the communicative meaning of the original text, the original word can be replaced with a word with a different conceptual meaning and similar cultural meaning, such as "a blindfold game in a dark forest – 捉迷藏" and "the white parapeted walls and vermilion gates – 朱门白墙".

## 6.2. Relationship between the Translator's Language Style and Translatability of the Work

As this paper analyzes, the translation of *The Gay Genius* is more inclined to the aesthetic expression of the target language in language style. Compared with the original work, it presents the characteristics of gorgeous rhetoric, complex sentence structure, and mixed language of vernacular and classical Chinese, which are in line with the translator's own language style. Zhang Zhenyu advocates that the translation of literary works should be based on "elegance", and the beauty of the original language that may be lost in the translation process should be filled with the beauty of the target language, so that the translation can be aesthetically compensated and have its independent artistic value. This paper proposes whether the use of this language style will affect the translatability of the original work, in order to seek the possibility of higher adaptability of the translation to the original work.

Translators are adept at their own areas of translation, with differences in genres and themes at the macro level, and in syntax and vocabulary at the micro level. It is one way to determine a competent translator based on the work itself. In addition, it is also a common way to select suitable works based on the translator's experience, style, and interests. Translation stylistics advocates the use of existing translation methods. On the basis of faithfully restoring the style of the original work, the originality of the translator is appropriately brought into play. Zhang Zhenyu's translation style of pursuing the elegant beauty runs through the entire translation of *The Gay Genius*. He chooses a language style that combines classical Chinese and vernacular while conforming to the background of the work and the social and cultural context. At the same time, this language style also provides readers an effective way to appreciate the author's thoughts and emotions, giving them a strong sense of being on the scene.

Hu Kaibao and Xie Lixin also recognized that the translator's style is highly adapted to the original work. They proposed that the translator's style referred to the personality that was stable and distinguished from other translators formed by the manifestation of the translator's subjectivity in the translation process [14]. Zhang Zhenyu has been engaging in the research of Lin Yutang for years and has translated most of his works, so he has a more comprehensive understanding and insight into the style and cultural consciousness of Lin's original works.

## 7. Conclusion

In the translation of Lin Yutang's *The Gay Genius*, different style conversion methods can be adopted in the translation of words and sentences according to the expression of style. The choice of the overall language style needs to consider the conversion of interlingual aesthetics and the orientation of the recipient, so as to achieve the translation effect of both the form and the content. Existing theoretical guidance and methodological summaries have confirmed the translatability of the original language and culture to a large extent. On this basis, translators can conduct in-depth explorations into the cultures of the two countries, as well as exemplify and practice the well-structured style translation framework. This paper analyzes only part of the theories, and the completeness and accuracy of style translation analysis still need to be improved. The ideal translation style is a faithful presentation of the original language style. However, due to the flexibility of translation, especially for all-encompassing literary texts, it is generally accepted that the translator's language style should be added to a certain range. With the improvement of translators' language conversion skills and cultural coordination ability and the development of modern translation theories, the style of translation should be able to break through current limitations and be further improved.

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