

# ***A Comparative Study of Two Chinese Version of Anne of the Green Gables from Perspective of Feminist Translation Theory***

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**Abstract:** In recent years, women have gradually noticed their identities and self-development with the improvement of women's social status around the world. Influenced by the Western feminist movement, people in China have gradually awakened their awareness of gender equality and paid more attention to female groups. Many works highlighting feminist characteristics have been introduced into China. As a result, women translators have been affected and conducted the translation works with more characteristics of female. This helps the spread and development of feminism widely. The research object of this thesis is two English-Chinese versions of "Anne of the Green Gable". "Anne of the Green Gables" is a feminist novel that tells the story of the heroine Anne growing up after she was adopted. It has strong feminist characteristics. Based on feminist translation theory, it uses textual scrutiny and comparative research methods to explore whether the translator's gender affects the output of the target language in translation. Furthermore, the feminist consciousness of female translator can be explored in language expression and cultural transmission; On the one hand, it can enrich the comparative analysis of female and male translators under feminist translation theory in academia, which can further promote the development of feminism, and draw the public's attention and recognition of female translators. In addition, as the children's literature, it has certain educational significance for the development of female children and the cultivation of gender awareness.

**Keywords:** feminist translation, Anne of Green Gables, comparative studies, translation strategies

## **1. Introduction**

Translation has experienced a shift from language to culture at the beginning, and now it has become increasingly mature and expanded to various fields with its obvious social nature. The study of translation should not only be limited to textual comparison, but also be conducted from social, historical, cultural, and other aspects. We should not only learn "how to translate" but also study "what to translate" and "why to translate". The cultural translation theorist Forster proposes to examine translation studies from a cultural perspective and attach importance to the position and important role of culture in translation.[1] Feminist translation explores translation from the perspective of gender studies as a part of the cultural level. In this context, by comparing to the translation from

male translator, the female translator can use some translation strategies to make creative changes to the text to achieve the characteristics of the translator's subjectivity, which highlights the status of female translators.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

Feminism, which first emerged in the late 19th century, is the foundation of female translation theory. The development of feminism has gone through three stages: Firstly, from the end of the 19th century to the 1940s, when men were the absolute authority, they began to sprout the idea with similarity of equality and pursuing equality and rationality; The second stage was from the 1960s to the 1970s, during which many scholars began to ponder the differences and inequalities between men and women; The third stage is from the 1980s to the 1990s, when people began to consider the subjective consciousness of women as independent individuals, jumping out of the shackles of gender and demanding equality [2].

Feminist translation theory began to develop in the 1980s and was influenced by the world feminist movement at that time. In addition, traditional translation theories were questioned and criticized when applied to modern literature, and feminist translation theory came into being and developed. Sherry Simon holds the view that the feminist translation is a cultural process and women translators can exert their subjective initiative to intervene in the original text during the translation process. She believes that women translators have the rights to show their identities, which has been ignored for a long time[3]. Feminist translation theory states that it is necessary to conduct translation from a feminist standpoint and fully demonstrate the discourse power of women in a translated text. This theory not only emphasizes the subjective role of the translator, but also highlights the uniqueness of women in the translation process. Women translators, influenced by gender awareness, can better convey the writing purpose that feminist texts are intended to express [4]. Translation is a political intention rooted in the cultural study of translation phenomena, and therefore is also a cultural strategy or political practice. Therefore, feminist translation theory has promoted the development of translation theory in modern society, with the goal of achieving gender inequality and changing people's understanding of traditional translation ideas.

In China, feminism began in the 1990s, and early scholars were influenced by many representatives of feminist translation theories, including Lori Chamberlain, Gayatri Spivak, Sherry Simon, and others. They focused their research on the existence of women, embedding gender awareness into translation concepts, and evaluating the historical and modern role of female translators; They try to rewrite the original text from a linguistic perspective and eliminate male centralism and gender discrimination. Besides, the equal relationship between the translation and the original text also be emphasized in their works [5].

## 3. Case Analysis

The research object is "Anne of the Green Gables"[6]. The author is Lucy Maud Montgomery, who was born in Canadian with the background of widespread feminist development in North America. Both characters and plots in the novel are full of feminist color. The novel is developed with a main line of Anne, an orphan girl was mistakenly adopted by Marilla and Matthew Cuthbert. Although she has experienced various hardship, she always maintained optimistic to life at Green Gables. Through this text, the author conveys women's desire for freedom and equality, freedom from the constraints of traditional frameworks, and the full expression of women's discourse power in a patriarchal society. Therefore, the characteristics of female elements emphasized in the text have certain requirements for translators' translation.

In this article, two Chinese versions of "Anne of the Green Gables" are chosen as the research objects, one is the translation of Ma Ainong [7], a female translator, and the other is the translation of Yao Jinrong [8], a male translator. By making contrary analysis of two translation work, this article aims to explore the impact of gender on the output of the translated language.

Mrs. Flotow at Translation and Gender: Translating in the "Era of Feminism" mentioned that the translation of the female era is also a reshaping of the previous female protagonists, a rewriting of those gender characteristics and attitudes previously given to women. She also advocated three feminist translation strategies "adding forewords and footnotes," "supplement," and "hijacking." [9] However, footnotes are not adopted widely in these two translations works. So, this paper conducts a comparative analysis of the translated text in combination with three translation strategies: supplement, hijacking, and language comparison based on feminist translation theory.

### 3.1. Supplement

"Supplement" is a translation strategy that modifies information based on differences between two languages. Translators can supplement some relatively vague information, which can help readers understand the content of the article, enrich readers' imagination of the content. This fully reflects the subjective initiative of female translators and shows their unique expression and perspectives. However, there is a certain difference between "Supplement" and "adding some information". Except for adding words not appearing in the translation for the purpose of embellishing or increasing readability, supplement also refers to the use of explanatory text by the translator to add his own interpretation of the indirect connotation which is not clearly in the original text [10].

Example 1:

ST: Overhead was one long canopy of snowy fragrant bloom. P15

TT: (F)Ma: 头顶上是一大片雪白、芬芳的花朵，像一长溜覆盖在上面的天篷。P15

(M)Yao: 头顶上雪白的苹果花芬芳袭人。P15

The example selected in the original text is the author's detailed description of the avenue along the way to Green Gamble. The original text describes the tall apple branches planted on both sides of the road, which stretch out to form an arch on the road; Compared to the male translator's translation, when dealing with environmental descriptions, the female translator Ma not only describes the arch shaped by the apple flower with a sense of hierarchy, but also adds metaphorical rhetoric to vividly depict the dense and clustered state of the flowers on the apple tree, "像...天篷" is very picturesque. With the guidance of feminist translation, female translators add more emotion or additional picturesque descriptions during the translation process, making the original image more vivid and better integrating the plot and novel images for readers, especially children's readers, enriching children's imagination.

### 3.2. Hijacking

"Abduction" refers to the sublimation of feminine descriptions in the original text by female translators, or the rewriting of language that vilifies women. Hardwood believes that translation is a political activity to let language speak for women, and his translated works fully show the feminization of language [11].

Example 2:

ST: Her freckles were more numerous and obtrusive than ever; the wind had ruffled her hatless hair into over-brilliant disorder; it had never looked redder than at that moment. P56

TT: (F)Ma: 她的雀斑比以往任何时候都更多、更突出;风把她那没有戴帽子的头发吹得乱蓬蓬的, 极为显眼, 她的头发从没像这一刻这么通红。P57

(M)Yao: 脸上的雀斑比过去还要多,还要明显,风把她那没戴帽子的头发吹得像团乱草、十分刺眼,发色火红,火红,前所未见。P54

This paragraph of the original text is a description of the appearance of Anne's protagonist. In the context of this feminist text, special attention should be paid to the translation of the language portrayed by the female protagonist. The original meaning of "over brilliant" was "too dazzling", and the female translator chose a neutral expression to translate when dealing with the word, "乱蓬蓬的, 极为显眼"; While male translators exaggerate the meaning conveyed by the original language even more. "乱草, 十分刺眼" contains some exaggerated descriptions that distort the image of the female protagonist. Under feminist translation theory, translators can fully exert their subjective initiative to sublimate and depict the excessively ugly parts of the female role in the article, with the aim of improving the image and status of the female protagonist. Similarly, for the part of Anne's hair color description, there are differences in the translation language of the two translators, while the female translator directly translates "头发从没像这一刻这么通红"; The male translator emphasized "火红" and repeated it to enhance the tone, reinforcing the creation of Annie's strange image of red hair. Given the current era and the novel background, the image of red hair may have derogatory connotations. It shows the disrespect from the male translator from the perspective of feminist translation theory. Therefore, in general, in dealing with the description of female images, female translators are better able to use appropriate language to describe female images than male translators. Under feminist translation theory, female translators' translation language is superior.

### 3.3. Comparative Language Analysis

Example 3:

ST: Marilla was a tall, thin woman, with angles and without curves; her dark hair showed some gray streaks and was always twisted up in a hard little knot behind with two wire hairpins stuck aggressively through it. P4

TT: (F) Ma: 玛丽拉是个精瘦的高个儿女人,棱角分明, 没有曲线。她乌黑的头发已有几丝灰白, 在脑后盘成一个结实的小发髻, 两只金属发夹毫不松劲地穿插在里面。P4

(M)

Yao: 玛丽拉长得高高的、瘦瘦的。她棱角分明, 却缺少女性的曲线, 乌黑的头发已染上些许白霜, 用两只金属发夹牢牢地绾在脑后, 煞是引人注目。P54

This passage is a depiction of the appearance of Marilla, who adopted Anne. She is also a struggling female figure in the novel who resists patriarchy but is bound by tradition. When dealing with the translation of hair descriptions, female translators use concise language and incorporate anthropomorphic rhetorical devices to make the picture feel strong and vivid, Male translators use the word "绾". Although translation is appropriate, feminist translation theory advocates translators' subjective initiative to enrich and modify the adaptability of the article to better convey the female image. In addition, for readers, especially children's readers, the expression of high-level vocabulary has limitations and less interest in their understanding of the novel.

Example 4:

ST: Away up in the barrens, behind Mr. Silas Sloane's place, the Mayflowers blossomed out, pink and white stars of sweetness under their brown leaves. P142

TT: (F) Ma: 远处, 在赛拉斯·斯隆的宅地后面那块贫瘠的土地上, 五月花争芳斗艳, 在它们褐色的叶子底下, 躲藏着粉红色和白色的星星般可爱的花朵。P145

(M)Yao: 远处, 在赛拉斯·斯隆的房子后面, 在那块沙土地上, 五月花芬芳扑鼻, 褐色的叶子下, 盛开着粉红和白色的星星般可爱的花朵。P135

In this example, female translators often use personified expressions such as "争芳斗艳" and "躲藏" when depicting May flowers, which are vivid and lovable, and give full play to their understanding of the novel for supplementary translation. However, male translators translate in a regular manner here, with a relatively less strong sense of imagery.

#### 4. Conclusions

Through a study of the two versions of "Anne of the Green Gables", it is found that there are differences between female translators and male translators in translation strategies and expressions. Due to their own physiological and social factors, female translators are more delicate and thoughtful in the processing of the translated language, emphasizing the independence, autonomy, and equality of women, which is in a continuous line with the dominant position of women advocated by feminist translation theory, and shows respect for women. It also reflects that female translators pursue gender equality and advocate the development of female self-consciousness in their translated works.

The development of feminism has opened a new research perspective for translation. On the one hand, it has enriched the application and innovation of translation theory in modern society, and on the other hand, it has helped female translators awaken feminist consciousness, better integrate with the original text, bring into play the role of translators' subjectivity, and break the tyranny of male discourse power. The author believes that under the guidance of feminist translation theory, although the subjectivity of female translators is more prominent, considering the relationship between gender and translation from the perspective of the translated text, whether male or female, will be beneficial to the output effect of the translated text, avoid radical gender thinking, and promote the better development of translation theory. In addition, this article selects children's books as the research object. The gender concepts conveyed in the translation and the translation of the content also have certain educational significance for the initial cultivation of children's gender awareness.

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