

Analysis of the Hybridity Translation Strategy of Moment in Peking from the Perspective of Post-colonialism

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Abstract: In the past, colonial countries and translators were in a similar situation which was marginalized. The emergence of cultural turn and the rise of some progressive theories, such as feminism and post-colonialism, have gradually reversed this situation. Post-colonialism emphasizes the vigilance against "cultural hegemony" under the neo-colonial system, and tries to reflect the original characteristics of the weak cultures in translation to safeguard their cultural and political independence. However, how to retain the original culture based on making the target language readers easy to accept is a difficult problem. Post-colonial theorists have discovered the "third space" of language and culture, and put forward the concept of "hybridity", which has skillfully solved the problem. This paper uses the method of case analysis to study the hybridity translation phenomenon in Lin Yutang's *Moment in Peking*. The study found that this book uses a lot of combination of domestication and foreignization, that is, hybridity translation strategy. It not only promoted the spread of Chinese culture, but also solved the problem of understanding difficulties.

Keywords: post-colonialism, hybridity, *Moment in Peking*

1. Introduction

In the 1950s and 1960s, the linguistic view of translation played a leading role in translation studies. Translation was regarded as the transformation between different languages, emphasizing the principles of faithfulness and equivalence. Although the translator is the subject of translation, it has long been stressed that "invisibility"[1]; Similar to some colonial countries, they were both marginalized. Since the famous "cultural turn" in the 1970s, it has deconstructed the definition of translation in the traditional sense, re-examined the opposition between the original text and the translated text, pushing translation research into the background of cultural, social and historical research [2]. Scholars have begun to re-examine the generation, process and results of translation activities from a broad cultural perspective. With increasingly political solid tendencies, pay more attention to issues such as race and imperialism.

As early as ancient Rome, translation was regarded as a tool for imperialist colonial expansion and conquest. In today's unequal power discourse between the East and the West, translation is really the power tool for the spread of western culture as the mainstream. The content of post-colonialism research is the relationship of cultural discourse power between colonial and suzerain countries at the linguistic, cultural and legal levels after the end of the colonial era [3]. It focuses on cultural hegemony and cultural identity. Embodying one's unique culture in translation is also one of the

means for the colonial people to resist. It becomes one of the important manifestations and driving factors of the cultural turn.

Moment in Peking is a novel by Lin Yutang in English from 1938 to 1939. The author regards it as a kind of translation. It tells the complex joys and sorrows among the three families of Zeng, Yao and Niu in Peking during the more than 30 years from the Boxer Movement in 1901 to the War of Resistance against Japan. It also includes the carving up of China by warlords, the May Fourth Movement, the Left-leaning and the outbreak of World War II, etc., showing a panoramic view of the changeful history of modern Chinese society. Both the time described in the book and the time of writing, China is at the stage of being invaded, which is consistent with post-colonialism. Therefore, the author decided to study the book through text reading and case analysis, studying the ingenious combination of domestication and foreignization from the perspective of postcolonial translation.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Research Status of *Moment in Peking*

According to the author's literature reading, it is found that the study of this book mainly focuses on the translation of culture-loaded words and the analysis of female images, which are closely related to post-colonial translation and feminist translation theories with high popularity at present. However, most scholars have chosen skopos theory, eco-translatology, etc., in the translation study of Chinese traditional culture, which rarely involved postcolonialism. The few articles concerning postcolonialism have only been analyzed from the perspective of foreignization translation strategies. Therefore, this paper decides to focus on domestication and foreignization, examining them from the perspective of a "hybridity" strategy.

2.2. The Research Status of Postcolonial Translation Studies in China

In the book *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications*, it is pointed out that the central issue of common concern between translation studies and postcolonialism is power relations, and together with gender studies, they are committed to safeguarding the career of translators [4]. China began introducing postcolonial theories as literary research and cultural criticism in the 1980s, mainly including the monographs and essays of Edward Said, Gayatri C. Spivak and Homi Bhabha. In 1999, the two major translated papers published in China were *Postcolonial Cultural Theory* compiled by Luo Gang and Liu Xiangyu and *Postcolonial Theory and Cultural Criticism* edited by Zhang Jingyuan. Both theses briefly describe the development history of postcolonial theory and introduce the main aspects of its concern, such as the criticism of orientalism, cultural identity, analysis of colonized people, and discussion of nationalism. They refuted China's positivism which has nothing to do with postcolonial discourse and stressed that the research scope of postcolonial theory should be expanded to a broader range of cultural relations between Western countries and the third world. At present, domestic research on postcolonialism mainly focuses on the introduction of the ideas of the early representatives. Still, few scholars combine the actual context of China to investigate its theoretical adaptability. The author believes that it is a pretty effective way to connect theory with the Chinese cultural context to verify and improve the theory. Therefore, this paper chooses a book that reflects a large number of traditional Chinese cultures to make a profound and detailed analysis of postcolonial translation theory.

3. Introduction to Postcolonial Translation Theory

3.1. Development Background and Main Points

After the end of World War II, many countries still have yet to achieved real independence. The world system is centered on the West and neocolonialists often control the colonies more subtly and flexibly in terms of religion and culture [5]. The third world countries and the western world were gradually showing cultural inequality and identity crisis. Under the influence of the two major philosophical trends of humanism and scientism, contemporary western literary theories showed diversified characteristics in the late 20th century, which include postcolonialism. It is mainly based on race and class, placing literary and political criticism in a broader context. It advocates the deconstruction of the western discourse center, the elimination of cultural hegemony and the realization of multiculturalism. It is a way of looking at intercultural power, the psychosocial changes brought on by the interrelated dynamics of dominance and submission, and geographic and linguistic displacement in the field of power-relations studies. One ignored phenomena, the control of one culture by another, is the sole thing it makes an attempt to explain.

The three most representative scholars of the postcolonial theory are Edward Said, Gayatri C. Spivak and Homi Bhabha. Said's *Orientalism* published in 1978 is the foundation work of post-colonialism. Said argues that *Orientalism* is about two opposing entities; two worlds [6]. He ascertains that Europeans divided the world into the East and the West or the civilized and the uncivilized or what Said refers to as 'othering'; 'ours' versus 'their' [6]. He pointed out that the Western hegemony made a seemingly scientific assumption about the East according to its own interests, so as to control the East and realize the hegemony of discourse. This complete discourse criticism system undoubtedly has a profound impact on the development of the whole postcolonial theory. It can be said that Said made postcolonialism become an important academic field.

Gayatri C. Spivak's theory has distinctively deconstructive characteristics, which makes her contribution to postcolonial translation theory indelible. As a feminist and postcolonial theorist, she believes that since translation is not a simple transfer of meaning, but a process of spreading and constructing meaning, it inevitably involves power and politics. When the power and politics embodied in translation involve simplification, devaluation and even oppression of the other, translation becomes a tool of violence [7]. In *The Politics of Translation*, she mainly analyzed the translation of women's texts in the third world. She found that in the process of translation, the translator would unconsciously show a sense of strength and impose the feminist ideology of the advanced society on the women of the third world. Such translation will make the text lose its original connotation, building a new colonial feature in the culture. In order to resist translation as violence, she put forward "translation as reading" to carry out decolonization, avoiding the contempt and devaluation of the other by imperialism and maintaining the independence, integrity and equality of individuals. With the emergence of neo-colonial forms in the era of globalization, it is of great practical significance to explore Spivak's translation thoughts for the in-depth study of post-colonial translation.

Homi Bhabha drew on the ideological achievements of the above two and kept alert to western culture. However, the difference is that he tried to find a "middle way", which treats the East-West relationship with the attitude of "reconciliation" and "negotiation". This paper will focus on it in the next section.

3.2. Introduction to the "Third Place" and "Hybridity" Translation Strategy

Homi Bhabha's theory is rather obscure. As he said, the "third space" itself cannot be represented. In brief, the main features of cultural translation in this space are heterogeneity, translation and

hybridization [8]. Translation involves the transformation of text, which is related to language and culture. Therefore, as a cross-language and cross-cultural activity, translation is in the "gap space" or "third space" of different languages and cultures. How to identify and deal with cultural differences is an unavoidable field and also the foothold for thinking about post-colonialism. Cultural differences in the "third space" will show a kind of instability of discourse, which deconstructs the fixity of colonial discourse and constructs the identity of different nationalities. When heterogeneous cultures are exchanged, they can resolve conflicts and unstable factors, and break down the political barriers that are opposite to each other. Highlighting cultural differences enables vulnerable cultures to gain speaking right, which can reproduce various national cultures.

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the word "hybrid" has appeared in English since the 17th century. In the early stage, it was mainly used in the fields of biology and social science, referring to the offspring of two different kinds of animals or plants or a new language that integrated the characteristics of multiple languages. However, this concept is used most frequently in the field of literature. Bakhtin defined "hybridity" as the mixture of two social languages within the limits of a single sentence and the scope of a sentence, and the mixture of two different language consciousness separated by the era, social differences or other factors. Homi Bhabha borrowed this concept and made "hybridity" the core of his theory. He believed that confusion was the symbol of colonial power production, which marked the inevitable change and rewriting of the culture of discrimination and oppression [9]. Hybridity in translation refers to the inevitable absence of some cultural elements in the original text in the target culture, such as exotic cultural images and concepts. There is always a difference between translation and creation. Many writers proficient in multiple languages advocate that the translation should retain some linguistic and cultural elements of the original text. It can be said that hybridity is an essential and universal feature of literary translation [10]. This paper focuses on the hybridity of domestication and foreignization translation strategies. Domestication is conducive to maintaining the purity of the native language and resisting the invasion of foreign culture. The translated version of domestication is easy to be accepted by readers and makes information exchange smoother. However, moderate exoticism is exactly where the foreign literary works arouse the readers' pleasure and interest. The one-sided domesticated translation hinders cultural exchange and causes cultural distortion. At present, most scholars hold a neutral attitude, especially postcolonial translators. They hold that domestication and foreignization are complementary in literary translation, playing an irreplaceable role respectively. Adding the analysis of power to the concept of cultural translation or acculturation allows us to go beyond conceptualizing identity through benign notions of cultural hybridity and translation [11].

4. Analysis of the Hybridity Translation Strategy of *Moment in Peking* by Post-colonialism

The author will analyze the postcolonial translation of *Moment in Peking* from the following three aspects: appellation, social culture (especially religion) and idiom.

Appellation:

Old Yao gargled with the tea and spat it into a spittoon.

"Laoyeh, the journey will be strenuous. [12]"

"Old Yao" and "laoyeh" are both the appellation of Yao Si'an. Mr. Lin used domestication in the narration of the third angle of view so that western readers can understand the identity of this person; Foreignization was adopted in the dialogue, which not only reflects the culture of appellation in the Republic of China but also conforms to the spelling habits of native English speakers. Besides, these two sentences are close to each other in the text, which will not cause difficulties for readers to understand.

Mulan called her Tadhieh (eldest sister) and so Mulan herself, although the eldest daughter was called Erh Hsiaochieh (number two daughter), and Mochow was called San Hsiaochieh (number three daughter) in the household [12].

This is similar to the translation method in the previous one. It also uses the transliteration method first to show the appellation of the daughter of a wealthy family in the Republic of China; Then use parentheses to make the western readers understand the relationship between the characters as much as possible. When translating person titles, we should try our best to present the original form and retain the Chinese cultural characteristics to the greatest extent. If it is difficult for overseas readers to understand, we can add basic information to supplement it, so as to accurately express the cultural connotation with the help of foreignization translation skills.

Social culture:

Mulan (magnolia) was the name of a Chinese Joan of Arc, celebrated in a well-known poem, who took her father's place as a general in an army campaign for twelve years without being recognized and then returned to put on rouge and powder and to dress as a woman again [12].

This is an introduction to the name of the heroine Yao Mulan. The author has made multiple interpretations. There are not only literal translations with spelling and story introduction of Mulan, but also “magnolia” to let foreign readers understand that “木兰” is a kind of flower; Joan of Arc is more ingenious: she is a national hero of France, a Catholic saint, and an essential figure in the Anglo-French war. Lin Yutang compared Hua Mulan to China's Joan of Arc, which made it easy for western readers to understand her heroic deeds and thus have a deeper understanding of the name.

She gave him the “eight characters,” consisting of the hour, day, month, and year of Mulan's birth, each being represented by two characters of the Celestial and Terrestrial Cycles [12].

This part refers to the “八字” and “天干地支” in Chinese traditional culture. Lin first translated “八字” into “eight characters” by literal translation and then explained its contents in detail. Today “天干地支” is well-known as “Heavenly Stems and Earthly Branches” in the west. It originated from observing celestial phenomena in ancient China and has a far-reaching influence, which is used in the calendar, numerology, calculation, naming and other respects. Here domestication is used to explain the Chinese calendar culture, which it is not entirely clear; Mainly through the foreignization strategy, Lin aroused the interest and attention of western readers to the Chinese culture, promoting its spread.

Idiom:

Mr. Yao himself bowed to them and recognized them as his tungchia friends, a condition of friendship which permitted the women of one family to see the men of the other family [12].

“Tungchia friends” is actually the Chinese proverb “通家之好”. The author first used transliteration here, then explained this word's meaning in detail. In the past, in China's feudal society, women were mainly responsible for household chores and had few opportunities to contact outsiders. They were even regarded as unruly when they met men who were not in their family. Such an explanation can help western readers understand the idiom's meaning and also the culture of China in a specific background.

“But there must be no transgression of the rules of decorum, if you value your future wife. Between husband and wife respect comes first.” Mrs. Tseng came from a learned family and she had these phrases at her tongue's tip [12].

Even if this book mainly uses foreignization, this part is a typical example of domestication. “Between husband and wife respect comes first” is the Chinese idiom “相敬如宾”, which has more than 2700 years of history. Due to the influence of feudal society, there has been a long-term phenomenon that men are superior to women in China's gender relations. This has also caused the westerners' stereotype that Chinese women are subordinate. This sentence skillfully uses

domestication and applies the pattern of the famous English proverb "East or west, home is best" to show western readers the bright side of Chinese marital relationships and promote their profound understanding of Chinese culture.

Through the research, it is found that this work mainly uses the foreignization translation strategy, and at the same time uses domestication to assist the western readers' understanding, which is the typical embodiment of "hybridity" in post-colonialism. The creation process of the English version of this work is a creative process of cultural translation. Under the historical background of the strong West and the weak East at that time, Lin Yutang used various dissimilation strategies such as transliteration and literal translation for Chinese culture-loaded words in the creation process of *Moment in Peking*, so that Chinese cultural characteristics can be preserved to the maximum extent. At the same time, he detailedly explained the incomprehensible places and naturally introduced Chinese culture into the West. In this process, Lin Yutang showed the culture with Chinese characteristics to western readers in an all-around way, so that the readers could appreciate the charm of Chinese culture [13].

5. Conclusion

In the Ming, Qing dynasty and modern times, Chinese culture once embarked on the path of overall westernization. In the post-colonial era, China still faces cultural "aphasia" and the new form of "cultural hegemony" of West. The emergence of postcolonial translation theory has reversed this situation to some extent. In the context of Chinese culture, it enlightens the translation of Chinese culture to seek the "third space" of both sides of power, so that Chinese culture can achieve good communication effect while retaining certain heterogeneity in the process of going out, so as to gain discourse power and reposition Chinese culture.

Lin Yutang adopted the hybridity translation strategy advocated by postcolonialism in the creation of *Moment in Peking*, which is conducive to building confidence in Chinese traditional culture, enhancing the understanding of Chinese traditional culture by foreign readers, and promoting cultural exchanges between the East and the West. Moreover, in order to explain a cultural phenomenon, he often both used domestication and foreignization in a paragraph, which will not cause readers' reading difficulties. In short, he not only took care of the feeling of western readers, but also effectively disseminated Chinese culture, reflecting the color of post-colonialism. It can be said that he sets a good example for the study and usage of postcolonial translation theory in the future.

However, the number of cases in this paper is still insufficient, and the analysis also has some subjectivity. The author hopes that more and more scholars will continue to pay attention to the influence of postcolonialism on the translation and dissemination of Chinese literature, so as to promote the acceptance and love of Chinese culture by more foreign readers.

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