A Study on the Translation of The Little Match Man from the Perspective of Creative Treason

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Abstract: Children's literature is the best reading material for children's enlightenment. Good children's literature works can broaden children's horizons and enrich their knowledge. The dissemination of foreign children's literature works is conducive to promoting cultural exchanges, helping children communicate with the world and know more excellent foreign cultures. Therefore, the study of children's literature translation is important in the dissemination of excellent children's literature works in various countries and to increase children's knowledge. Based on the theory of creative treason in medio-translatology, this study takes Huang Yiqing's translation of *The Little Match Man* as the research object, and adopts the method of comparative observation and case analysis to sort out the creative translation and treason in Huang Yiqing's translation. This thesis summarizes and analyzes the creative treason from personalized translation and simplified translation in Huang's translation of *The Little Match Man*. Based on creative treason, this thesis discovers that many expressions in the translated version of *The Little Match Man* seemingly deviate from the source text, but the "rebellious" translation can help children readers accurately understand the real meaning of the source text, which indicates that creative treason is actually another form of fidelity.

1. Introduction

In the new era, translation is playing an increasingly important role in promoting communication and understanding between different cultures. Translation has also gradually transformed from the verbal communication to the cultural exchanges. The introduction to creative treason has bridged the communicative gap between different cultures, playing an important role in expanding the existing translation strategies, as well as promoting the dissemination and development of the excellent cultures of various countries. In 1971, Robert Escarpit first put forward creative treason in his book Sociology of Literature and he emphasizes that translation is a creative treason and Yukio Otsuka and Weisstein also discussed the theory of creative treason from the perspective of comparative literature. In China, Xie Tianzhen defines creative treason as a basic theory of translation studies, which provides a new translation perspective for literary translation and enriches

translation theoretical studies. By studying Huang Yiqing's creative and unfaithful behaviors in the translation of *The Little Match Man*, this thesis expects to summarize children's literature translation skills and strategies, provide new research ideas for children's literature translation, and help more excellent foreign children's literature works to "bring in", as well as guide excellent Chinese children's literature to "go global".

2. Creative Treason and the Translation of *The Little Match Man*

Creative treason breaks a new path for translation studies with its insightful academic vision[1], which can help translators get rid of the confinement of the source text. As a special translation category, children's literature translation needs special attention in the process of translation. The following mainly introduces the main concepts of creative treason and children's literature translation.

2.1. Creative Treason

Translation is always a kind of creative treason, and translation is rebellious. That is to say, creative treason works in a completely unexpected reference system (language), and translation is a creative process, because it gives literature a new look and facilitates its exchanges with more readers, prolonging the life of literature[2]. The value of creative treason for the creative treason has prolonged the life of the source text[3]. Yukio Otsuka points out that translation is usually a process of "creative treason"—neither thoroughly refused, nor copy; the reader should accept the production of original information in a creative way[4]. Rabassa Gregory has divided the treason into three kinds: the composed of words, the betrayal of words, and the betrayal of language[5]. Zhuang Peina discusses the relation between creative treason and faithfulness, expressiveness and elegance and emphasizes that the theory has been greatly exaggerated by scholars by simply deviating from the source text objectively on the basis of faithfulness[6].

Translator is the leader in the use of creative treason, but the translator must know that the main value of creative treason is creation, rather than treason[7]. Fan Wuqiu and Fan Toujiao extend creative treason to the scientific translation, suggesting that creative treason is applicable in scientific translation, in which creative treason sometimes plays the role of "attacking" and "blasting" something[8]. Wang Zhenping points out that "creative treason" is restrictive and should only be applied to activities that can be accepted by readers, and creative treason is in the category of reader's acceptance theory, instead of translation theory[9]. Starting from literary translation, Gao Chaqing and Cai Manyuan believe that the translator's creativity in the translation of literary texts is to express the original meaning rather than the form, which corresponds to the selection of faithful meaning without reserving its linguistic form[10].

Any concept conducive to people's understanding needs to have some prescriptive features to control the infinite extension of the concept's meaning and avoid self-dissolution[11]. Creative treason is no exception. Xie Tianzhen summaries the feature of creative treason into two points in his book Medio-translatology: variation and the change of acceptance environment[12]. When a work is introduced into a new field, a series of formal variations occur, but the most fundamental characteristic of creative treason is that this variation introduces the source text into unexpected acceptance and the original literary form is hence changed[12]. However, Liu Xiaogang has a different opinion that creative treason is a universal, historical and source-text prescriptive[11]. Although some translators believe that the original style is a thing of the past, the continuous retranslation of famous works also reflects the differences in understandings and reproductions of different translators about the original styles, as well as the reader's aesthetic pursuit of translations[13]. Therefore, no matter how perfect of the source text is, there will always be deviation

in target text to some extent.

Creative treason plays an important role in literary translation. But creative treason doesn't apply to all translations. According to Medio-translatology, creative treason is divided into two types: conscious creative treason and unconscious creative treason, whose existence forms are further divided into personalized translation, mistranslation and omissions, partial translation and transcompilation, and relay translation and adaptation[12].

2.2. The Translation of *The Little Match Man*

Children's literature was first introduced to China in the late Qing Dynasty, and the translation of children's literature also began during the same period. Both of them formed an upsurge at that time. Since then, many scholars have studied Medio-translatology, and many translators have produced many excellent children's literature works, making a crucial contribution to the development of Chinese children's literature. A host of scholars have discussed the children's literature translation in different approaches. Wen Jun and Wang Chenshuang points out that a large number of translations of foreign children's novels and stories during the Anti-Japanese War enabled modern writers and translators of children's literature to valuable experience[14]. Some scholars believe that the scope of translation studies of children's literature should be expanded. Using the corpus to analyze and compare the differences between adult novels translation and children's novels translation, it is easy to see that cognitive translation studies have been flourished till now[15]. Some scholars have their views on the style of children's literature translation. Children's literature is quite different from literary translation in terms of phonology, graphology, pragmatism and discourse due to its peculiarities. Therefore, a variety of stylistics and theories provide new analytical tools and perspectives for translators which could reproduce the original ideas and achieve stylistic equivalence[16].

From the perspective of translation studies of comparative literature and world literature, the translator's subjectivity and the unique value of the text are intensively emphasized in literary translation activities. The translator's creative treason with his or her personal imprint is bound to appear in the translation through translation. In the translation of *The Little Match Man*, this imprint is perfectly reflected. Huang Yiqing is a well-known translator of children's literature and writer. She has made a great contribution to the development of early children's literature in China. She always enjoys doing children's literature translations[17]. She was born in the late Qing Dynasty when advanced Western ideas were introduced into China. She completed her study in Japan, and her ideology was influenced by Western thinking. As the first book of Huang Yiqing after the anti-Japanese war, *The Little Match Man* had a great impact at that time and promoted the development of children's literature in China.

3. Case Analyses of Creative Treason in Huang Yiqing's Translation

A deep understanding of the essence of children's literature, a keen sense of genre and the ability to translate genre, and a sense of mission and responsibility to "translate for children" are all translation qualities that translators need to possess[18]. Therefore, it is of great importance to study the specific language expressions and characteristics of language in children's literature translation and find out the corresponding translation strategies. In the translation, Huang reproduces the entertainment, aesthetic pursuit and artistic characteristics of children's literature, which makes the translation lively and interesting, and also receives many children's admiration. In this chapter, this thesis will analyze the creative treason in *The Little Match Man* translated by Huang Yiqing from the perspectives of personalized translation and simplified translation in combination with specific cases.

3.1. Personalized Translation

Upon careful study, the personalized translation in *The Little Match Man* is mainly reflected in the adoption of two translation methods: adaptation and alienation. The following part will comparatively analyze the source and the target texts via focusing on the two translation methods.

3.1.1. Adaptation

Adaptation is a distinctive feature of personalized translation, and the main purpose of it is to bridge the gap between the two languages and cultures by using familiar language to readers in the target language, and to reduce the burden of readers' reading comprehension[19]. There are many translation skills under the translation strategy of adaptation. The following discussion and analysis will center on the three translation skills.

3.1.1.1. Substitution

Substitution is a translation skill that replaces a cultural concept or image in the source language with a cultural concept or image in the target language, so as to achieve a similar textual function. Translators should first judge whether the source language is suitable for the audience of the target language in translation, and if the preset information cannot be shared, a balancing act is required[20].

Example 1:

Source Text: "Don't laugh," he exclaimed, "I'm a Haji."
Target Text: "不要笑，"他要求着，"我是一位'木神'。"

Figure 1: This caption is the first example.

As shown in Fig. 1, "Haji" is a religious term which refers to a Muslim who has been to Mecca as a pilgrim. Western readers can easily understand what the original author wanted to convey. It literally refers to a Muslim saint, but the readers of the translation do not necessarily know the word and what it means. Combined with the context, it can be seen that this match is actually a willow tree, and Huang Yiqing uses substitution to translate "Haji" into "God of Wood", which is a creation in her translation. On the other hand, her translation of "Haji" into "God of Wood" is also a rebellion because it apparently departs from the source text. This creative treason allows young readers to understand the meaning of the source text directly when they are reading without losing too much religious connotation of the original text.

3.1.1.2. Diction

English is a language with strong adaptability and plasticity, and its adaptability and plasticity are prominently manifested in the flexibility of word meanings[21]. Diction is to choose the true meaning when reading the source text, and select words with the appropriate meaning in translation. It is impossible to write according to the meaning of the words in the source text invariably during translation. Translators needs to make consideration in combination with the context and finally chooses the appropriate meaning.

Example 2:

Source Text: Trying to forget how tedious it was I began to spoke into all the corners of the room, hoping to discover something with which to amuse myself.
Target Text: 我试想驱逐我的无聊，我开始在房间的每一个角落里找来找去，想找出一些好玩的事情。

Figure 2: This caption is the second example.

In the example of Fig. 2, "Forget" means stop remembering something in mind. In fact, it is a

stative verb in the source text. Huang chooses to translate it with a dynamic verb "expel". This is an act of creative treason against the source text by Huang. Children are usually interested in dynamic object became of their immature cognition. She transforms static verbs into dynamic ones, making the sentences more vivid and enhancing the vividness of the language. Though Huang's translation formally rebels the source text, it creatively stimulates children's reading enthusiasm and enhance their vitality.

3.1.2. Alienation

Alienation is the opposite of adaptation. Alienation means that the translated text is not restricted by the target language culture, but retains the language characteristics of the source text, so that the target language readers can understand the foreign culture better. Alienation deliberately breaks the target language conventions by retaining exotic style in the original text when generating the target text[22]. The following analyses will be made from three translation skills under alienation.

3.1.2.1. Division

English is a hypotaxis language, and when expressing multi-layered logical relationships, it often connects many modifying components or clauses through linking means and morphological changes. In Chinese, the same meaning is expressed by phrases and clauses, which are usually delivered point by point. Therefore, when translating English into Chinese, it is a transformation from a formative structure to a conjunctive structure. This transformation is often manifested in division.

Example 3:

Source Text: ...I would feel my ear being tickled and I would wave my hand as if brushing away an insect, and that would throw poor Fiam to the floor from a height that was really dangerous to him.

Target Text: 我觉得耳朵是在发痒，我用我的手拨开，像我拨开一只小昆虫一样；这么一来，这可怜的菲姆就被重重地摔在地板上；这件事，对他实在很危险的。

Figure 3: This caption is the third example.

The source text in Fig. 3 is a compound sentence with an attributive clause. If this sentence is translated in sequence, it will be too long, which doesn't conform to the cognitive ability of children. Therefore, Huang Yiqing divides the sentence into two parts, translating what will happen firstly, and then making a comment on the result of this event. Division is creative in content and treasonable in form, which makes the translation clear in organization and conforms to children's reading habits.

3.1.2.2. Paraphrase

TParaphrase refers to abandoning the specific image in the original text and directly explaining the meaning of the source text. Paraphrase is not to convert language symbols simply, but to analyze the text and combine language knowledge with encyclopedic knowledge[23].

Example 4:

Source Text: What if I should wipe your coat off and put on a Chinese stamp to punish you?
Target Text: 我想罚你，把你身上的邮票刮个干净。

Figure 4: This caption is the fourth example.

As shown in Fig. 4, "Coat" literally means "cloth" in Chinese, and the source text refers to the mark left by Japanese stamps glued to the little match man, and it is not the real clothes. Huang

Yiqing creatively translates the "coat" into "stamp" without conforming to the original text, which seems to be inconsistent with the original text, but it echoes with the former context. Such creative treason just properly enters the storyline of the previous plot into the reader, making the whole storyline more coherent.

3.2. Simplified Translation

The simplified translation means that the translation should be as concise as possible without long and complicated sentences and any other obscure language while ensuring its complete content. This can ensure that people can understand it at a glance after reading it, rather than struggling to figure out the hidden meaning. It is great to improve the quality of translation by simplifying[24]. According to Xie Tianzhen, omission and mistranslation can all be classified into simplified translation[12].

3.2.1. Mistranslation

Mistranslation mainly belongs to the unconscious type of simplified translation. The occurrence of mistranslation is because the translator's lack of sufficient understanding of the connotation or cultural background of the original text, resulting in inaccurate translation, vague translation, over-translation and translation ambiguity. However, mistranslation inevitably exists, and sometimes error has extraordinary research value, because mistranslation reflects the translator's misunderstanding and misinterpretation of another culture, and is an obstacle in cultural or cultural exchanges[12].

Example 5:

Source Text: I'm going to tell you something that you must never tell any one.
Target Text: 我告诉你们一个故事，是你们从来没有告诉过人的。

Figure 5: This caption is the fifth example.

The target text in Fig. 5 is an unconscious mistranslation. The source text should have been translated into "you must never tell anyone", but Huang translates it into "that you never told any one". Huang's translation is incomprehensible, both in terms of prose and logic. She uses word-for-word translation here. Word-for-word translation adopted in this sentence is a mistranslation because the target text completely deviates from the source text and fails to convey the message that the original author wants to convey. This is the unconscious creative treason according to Xie Tianzhen's classification of creative treason.

3.2.2. Omission

Omission is classified into the conscious type and the unconscious type[12]. The unconscious type mainly means that the translator did not notice the sentence when translating, and missed it in translation. Conscious omission is to delete some negative or indelicate words and expressions in the original text.

Example 6:

Source Text: They are killing each other; they pursue, they shout, they gallop on horseback.
Target Text: 他们追着，喊着，骑着马疾驰着。

Figure 6: This caption is the sixth example.

Comparing the source text with the target text in Fig. 6, it can be intuitively seen that "killing each other" has not been translated. Huang Yiqing makes a conscious omission here, and "killing each other" has been omitted. Her translation seems to rebel the source text, but it creatively ensures

the childishness of the target text. Childhood is the time when children acquire knowledge, and "kill" is a bloody action which costs them time to understand, so it is unsuitable to accept such words with a passive semantic tendency. It is in line with the requirements of children's literature after omitting it. It is a rebellion, but more than a creation which can better maintain the favorable reading environment for children readers.

4. Conclusion

This thesis combines creative treason with translation, and studies the creative treason in *The Little Match Man* translated by Huang Yiqing. On the basis of creative treason, this thesis has an in-depth discussion on the translation of children's literature, gained a deeper understanding of the consideration and use of words and phrases in the translation of children's literature, providing a new perspective for the translation of children's literature. In Huang's translation of *The Little Match Man*, she creatively translated some words with western colors into local colors, deviated from the sentence structure, and combined the two to make the translation readable in form and content. They are more in line with the knowledge background and reading habits of the children readers of the translation. Thus, creative treason in Huang's translation doesn't rebel the meaning of the original text.

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