

English Translation of Traditional Chinese Medicine Classics from the Perspective of German Functionalist Translation Theory

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Abstract: Traditional Chinese Medicine is a medical science that the Chinese people have gradually found and developed in the process of combating disease for thousands of years. As an outstanding representative of the Chinese civilization system, Chinese medicine has rapidly developed in recent years, and it has also achieved certain success in international exchange. The Chinese Medical Fever has continually set off an upsurge in the world. In order to better promote the development of Chinese medicine, we should attach great importance to the translation of Chinese medicine classics. This article mainly analyzes the English translation of TCM classics from the perspective of German functionalist translation theory, hoping to help to promote the development of TCM classics translation work.

1. Introduction

Translation studies became an independent and relatively mature discipline until the 1990s. If this young discipline is compared to a big river, medical translation is trickles from river. But with the advancement of technology and the rapid development of Chinese medicine, medical translation, as part of science and technology translation, is gradually becoming an important tributary in the field of translation. The English translation of TCM classics is an important part of medical translation. It started in the 1950s, 1960s to the 1890s and reached the heyday in the 1990s. Nowadays, there are many TCM classics, such as The Yellow Emperor's Internal Classic, Treatise on Febrile Diseases and Miscellaneous, etc. These TCM classics was translated into English and widely circulated, making an important contribution to promoting the prosperous development of Chinese medicine.

2. German Functionalist Translation Theory and Its Role in English Translation of Traditional Chinese Medicine Classics

The German functionalist translation theory appeared in the 1970s and it includes many subsystems, namely Hans Vermeer's Skopostheorie, Katharina Reiss's text-typology, and Justa Holz-Manttari' s theory of translation action, Christiane Nord's Function plus Loyalty. The translation skopostheorie is the core of German functional translation theory. The main objective of translation skopostheorie is the purpose and function of the target text determine translation strategy.

With the rapid development of translation work of TCM classics, now our understanding of German functionalist translation theory is deepening and critical. Some scholars have suggested that it can be regarded as a kind of translation theory that views translation purpose as the core, with standard diversification emphasizing the intercultural communication function of translation, taking into account the multilateral relationship between the initiator of translation, the original author, the translator and the target readers.[1] With the wide spread of traditional Chinese medicine science, the requirements for the translation of TCM classics are getting higher and higher. At present, the lack of correct translation strategy guidance and systematic theoretical guidance is the main problem that hinders the efficiency and quality of TCM classics translation work.[2] The German functionalist translation theory has been mature and has been proved that it has good practical value through many practices. Therefore, it can be used to guide the translation work of Chinese medicine

classics.

3. English translation of TCM classics from the perspective of German functionalist translation theory

3.1 English translation of Chinese classics from the perspective of terminology translation

Traditional Chinese medicine classics involve many professional terms, many of which are unique to traditional Chinese medicine. In the process of English translation of Chinese medicine classics, the terminology can be translated under the guidance of German functionalist translation theory for better understanding. Take *Treatise on Febrile Diseases and Miscellaneous* for example, there are many versions of translation now. The popular ones are the visions of translation of Luo Xiwen and the translation of Wei Naijie. There are obvious differences between these two versions of translation in both translation method and style. From the perspective of terminology translation, Wei Naijie adopts the literal translation. He lists most of the individual Chinese characters and their corresponding English words from original book to the translation appendix. When translating the terms, replace Chinese characters with corresponding English words, resulting in an English term with a "fake" nature. And in Wei Naijie's translation, the application of modern medical terms is relatively less, which is caused by the translator's conscious avoidance. The reason why the translator does so is based on the "translation purpose" in the functionalist translation theory, that is, the translator hopes that the translation can reproduce the original appearance of the original text and maintain the independence and integrity of the concept of Chinese medicine. Therefore, in the process of translation, the translator and his team choose to translate words to words in order to truly reoccur the uniqueness of Chinese medicine in the translation and distinguish it from modern medicine. In contrast to Wei Naijie's translation, Luo Xiwen's translation mainly adopts the method of free translation, which draws on modern medical terms, and adopts transliteration methods and morpheme word formation occasionally. This is also based on the "translation purpose" in functionalist translation theory. The initiator of the translation regards the ordinary readers of the West as the target readers, which will make the ordinary readers of the West understand and accept the TCM classics as the purpose of translation. Therefore, in the process of translation, the translator considers more about the actual meaning of the translation and the cultural environment of the target reader. In the term translation, what should be considered is how to make it easier for the target readers to accept, in order to achieve the purpose of translation.

It is precisely because of the different purposes of translation that there are significant differences in the translation of terms between the translation of Luo Xiwen and the translation of Wei Naijie. The following passage are mainly discussed from three aspects: symptom terms, disease name terminology and therapy terminology:

1) Symptom terms. Example: the word "瘛瘲" of the original text, *Treatise on Febrile Diseases and Miscellaneous*, was translated as "convulsions and spasms" in the translation of Luo Xiwen. In Wei Naijie's translation, it translated as "tugging and slackening". The word "瘛" in the original text means "shrinkage", especially refers to the contraction due to the spasm of the tendons; "瘲" means "stretch", especially refers to the stretch due to the relaxation of the tendons. The original meaning of "瘛瘲" is hand and foot convulsion[3]. The "tugging" in Wei Naijie's translation, its primary form is "tug" that means dragging and pulling. The primary form of "slackening" is "slacken", it means to relax or slow down a certain force or movement. When target readers read the translation of Wei Naijie, they may fell puzzled: What are you dragging to? Is it the body? What to relax? Is it also a body? Why do you have to drag your body and make it relax? The "convulsions and spasms" in Luo Xiwen's translation, which means spasm. It is a modern medical term, which is more accurate and easier to understand by the target readers.

2) Disease name terminology. Example: In the original text, *Treatise on Febrile Diseases and Miscellaneous*, "Bentun" is translated as "Bentun (Gastroenteroneurosis)" in the translation of Luo Xiwen. In Wei Naijie's translation, it is translated as "running piglet". In the original text, "Bentun"

refers to the patient's awareness of "palpitations below the umbilicus", which feels like a running pig's as the primary symptom of the disease [4]. In Wei Naijie's translation, he translated it directly into the "running piglet", which makes the target readers confused when reading it. The translation of "Bentun" in Luo Xiwen's translation is a transliteration. At the same time, the word "Bentun" is supplemented by the morpheme word formation. "Gastroenteroneurosis" is composed of four affixed and roots, namely "gastro-", "entero-", "neuro-", "-sis", that is, stomach, intestine, nerve, disease respectively. In this way, it can make the readers understand that "Bentun" refers to a gastrointestinal neurosis.

3) Therapy terminology. Example: In the original text, *Treatise on Febrile Diseases and Miscellaneous*, it is "sweating". In the translation of Luo Xiwen, it is translated as "diaphoresis". In Wei Naijie's translation, it is translated as "promote sweating". "Promote sweating" is a literal translation of "sweating" and is a reasonable translation, while the "diaphoresis" is a modern medical term, which is more specialized and formal.

The Wei Naijie's literal translation method seems to achieve the intended purpose on the surface, but in fact his translation is confusing, which makes it difficult for the target readers to understand, and even distorts the original meaning. Although most of the terms in Wei Naijie's translation are detailed after the passage, the meaning of the terms in the text is unclear, and it will still bring trouble and confusion in reading. From the perspective of German functionalist translation theory, although Wei Naijie's translation is for the purpose of translation, and is loyal to the original text in terms of writing. But the translator has dealt too much, making the translation information messy and having communication barriers. Actually it did not loyal to the deep meaning of the original text, so it is difficult to achieve the purpose of translation and the intercultural communication function of translation and the relationship between the original author, translator and target reader is not coordinated. The translation of Luo Xiwen, which mainly adopted free translation, and added the morpheme word formation and reference to modern medical words, makes it easier for readers to understand and accept. So it better achieves its translation purpose, and realize the effective coordination of the relationship between translators and target readers. But the translations are generally terminologization in modern medicine, lacking annotations, weakening the unique culture of Chinese medicine, and not coordinating the relationship between the original author and the translator.

3.2 English translation of Traditional Chinese Medicine classics from the perspective of sentence translation

In most Chinese medicine classics, it adopted classical style of writing, so it is relatively difficult to translated into English. Therefore, in the process of translating Chinese medicine classics, sentences can be translated under the guidance of German functionalist translation theory in order to better understand it. Similarly, in the case of *Treatise on Febrile Diseases and Miscellaneous*, Wei Naijie's translation is based on the structural characteristics of the original classical style of writing, it is the word for word equivalent to the original text in form, and place the fragments that are lacking in the sentence in "[]". This reflects its translation purpose - to reproduce the original appearance of the original text. The translation of Luo Xiwen mainly adopts the form of scientific and technological English, and combines a large number of verb nominalization, passive voices, attributive postpositions, accompanying adverbials, and clauses etc. It is according to the language habits of the target readers, reflecting its translation purpose - to facilitate the target readers to understand and accept the translation.

Example: In the original text *Treatise on Febrile Diseases and Miscellaneous*, it writes "伤寒六七日，结胸热实，脉沉而紧，心下痛，按之石者，大陷胸汤主之" Luo Xiwen translated it as "Febrile disease caused by Cold, six to seven days: Blocked-up Chest caused by an excessive pathogenic heat with a deep and tense pulse, pain in the chest and epigastrium, and a hard "mass" like a stone on palpation are the symptoms and Signs suitable to Decoction of Greater Xianxiong. " In Wei Naijie's translation, it translated as "When in cold damage [that has lasted for] six or seven days, [there is] chest bind heat repletion, in which the pulse is sunken and Tight and [there is] pain

below the heart, which is stone-hard when pressure is applied, Major Chest Bind Decoction (dà xiàn xiōng tāng) governs. [5] " Wei Naijie's translation is a literal translation and the supplemented content is placed in "[]", which uses two clauses, but the overall translation structure is still not compact enough. In the translation of Luo Xiwen, put "Febrile...days" in front of the sentence in the form of a subtitle, then list a series of symptoms, and apply "are the symptoms and signs suitable to" at the end, it including an accompanying adverbial. The overall structure is simple and visual, so that the target reader is easy to understand and accept.

4. Conclusion

In summary, from the view of German functionalist translation theory, when translating Chinese medical classics into English, we must first establish a reasonable translation purpose, and ensure that it does not violate the original author's writing intentions, and then use flexible translation methods on the basis of loyalty to the original text. Ultimately making the translations have communicative meaning in the target cultural environment, which is convenient for the target readers to understand and accept.

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