

Original Paper

Achieving Eco-Balance in Translating Non-Fiction Literature: An Approach through Adaptation and Selection—With *Shark's Fin and Sichuan Pepper* as a Case

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Abstract

*This paper aims to provide valuable insights for future translators dealing with the English-to-Chinese translation of non-fiction literature, employing principles from Eco-Translatology. The research focuses on the translation of *Shark's Fin and Sichuan Pepper*; utilizing the framework of Translation as Adaptation and Selection. By evaluating the degree of multi-dimensional transformations, reader's feedback, and translator quality in the existing Chinese version, the paper assesses eco-balance within the translated work, considering the hybrid nature of non-fiction literature and its linguistic, cultural, and communicative aspects. Based on the analysis, the paper suggests that translators should strive for comprehensive dimensional transformations, with emphasis on the communicative dimension, while considering other dimensions based on the content type (informative, literary, or hybrid). Additionally, constant attention to the target readership is essential throughout the translation process. These findings contribute to enhancing the quality of English-to-Chinese translations of non-fiction literature.*

Keywords

non-fiction literature translation, Translation as Adaptation and Selection, Eco-Translatology

1. Introduction

As a literary concept, “non-fiction literature” originated in the United States during the 1960s when journalists began chronicling their personal experiences in novel form. Truman Capote, an American author, was the first to introduce this concept in his non-fiction novel *In Cold Blood*, which meticulously details the 1959 murders of a family of four. Since then, non-fiction literature has flourished globally, including in China, where its mass publication became one of the most notable phenomena in the 21st-century Chinese publishing industry. The influx of high-quality English

non-fiction literature into China includes translations of Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award-winning books, with their numbers more than doubling since 2000, compared to the period from the 1960s to the 1990s.

However, in China, research on non-fiction literature translation remains insufficient. It was only in 2006 that Chinese scholars began systematic studies on this genre, mostly from a literary perspective rather than focusing on translation aspects. Among the 347 papers on non-fiction literature in the CNKI (China Integrated Knowledge Resources System) database, only 8 are specifically about translation. Furthermore, there are currently no established strategies for translating non-fiction literature from English to Chinese. Addressing these gaps, this paper aims to explore the translation of non-fiction literature from English to Chinese and identify effective translation strategies for this genre.

Shark's Fin and Sichuan Pepper was penned by Fuchsia Dunlop, a British cook and food writer with a specialization in Chinese cuisine. Her interest in Chinese cuisine was piqued during her first visit to China in 1992, leading her to take evening Mandarin classes in London. Subsequently, she secured a British Council scholarship to study at Sichuan University, where she became the first foreigner to enrol in the professional chefs' training course at the Sichuan Institute of Higher Cuisine. Over the following decade, her extensive travels across China contributed significantly to non-fiction literature as she recounted her intense experiences of Chinese gastronomy.

As a non-fiction literary work, *Shark's Fin and Sichuan Pepper* is an engaging and meticulously documented exploration of Chinese food culture, reflecting the author's perspectives on China's foodways while presenting a diverse array of regional Chinese cuisines. The book received the IACP Jane Grigson Award in the US and the GFW Kate Whiteman Award for Food and Travel in the UK. This paper centres on its latest Chinese version, which was translated by He Yujia in 2018.

The translation has garnered enthusiastic reviews from Chinese readers, and interestingly, many assume that the book was penned by a foreigner in Chinese. Such widespread popularity attests to the translation's value. The translator skillfully balances various dimensions in the translational eco-environment, producing a high-quality translation that could serve as an inspiration for enhancing non-fiction literature translation in general. Through the analysis of *Shark's Fin and Sichuan Pepper*, this paper aims to discuss potential strategies for English-to-Chinese translation of non-fiction literature based on Hu Gengshen's Translation as Adaptation and Selection theory.

2. Literature Review

Non-fiction literature studies conducted outside of China predominantly focus on the genre's definition, distinctive features, and the translation challenges stemming from these characteristics, rather than delving into comprehensive translation strategies.

In her notable work, *The Arvon Book of Literary Non-Fiction*, Sally Cline (2012) offers a definition of non-fiction literature, emphasizing its foundation in real events and its hallmark of originality in thought and expression. As a subgenre of nonfiction, it revolves around factual occurrences or existing

subjects while also embodying an essential literary trait: the adept use of refined and polished language. Similarly, Martina Bertić (2015) posits that non-fiction literature involves factual writing interwoven with literary techniques, encompassing the artful use of imagery, texture, colour, word choice, rhythm, and voice, as well as the skilful employment of fictional devices, such as suspense or a narrative arc. Based on this definition, non-fiction literature can encompass diverse categories, including travel writing, food writing, and biographies.

Researchers concur that non-fiction literature exhibits a hybrid nature, wherein informative and literary aspects coalesce. John Hollowell (2011) argues that its amalgamation of journalistic and fictional techniques, presented in a novelistic form, represents an artful hybrid. Eva Cossé (2000) describes it as “well-written and informative books”. Similarly, Christoph Buchwald (2000) deems literary non-fiction as “accessible and well-written non-fiction books”. Diane Webb (2000) emphasizes that for non-fiction to attain ‘literary’ status, it must also narrate a compelling story, akin to our expectations from literature. Correspondingly, Danielle Losman (1998) asserts that the translation of non-fiction literature “must be entertaining while maintaining clarity and ease of understanding”. Vera van Schagen (2009) elucidates how this hybrid nature, bridging the realms of fiction and non-fiction, poses challenges in categorizing subgenres of non-fiction literature. Moreover, Kelly Washbourne and Ben Van Wyke (2019) highlight the inherent literary essence entwined in the translation of such non-fiction texts.

The hybrid nature of non-fiction literature poses intricate challenges for translation. For instance, Danielle Losman (1998) and Martina Bertić (2015) both contend that technical vocabulary can present difficulties. In some cases, the terminology may be highly specialized, necessitating the translator to seek appropriate equivalents in the target language, given that the vocabulary is deeply grounded in factual content. Furthermore, akin to literary translation, the translation of non-fiction literature should diligently account for style nuances, individual voice, as well as the cultural and linguistic specificities of the original text (Kelly Washbourne & Ben Van Wyke, 2019).

While the aforementioned studies provide crucial references for this paper and prior relevant research in China, they primarily focus on the features of non-fiction literature and the ensuing translation challenges, while scarcely offering explicit methodologies to address these issues.

Regarding Chinese studies, the predominant emphasis lies on the historical aspect of non-fiction literature translation and its impact on Chinese literature. For instance, Li Shan (2019) and Zhang Xiaomin (2019) explore translation methods through the lens of Newmark’s translation theory. Li outlines compensation methods, such as amplification, to overcome translational difficulties arising from cultural disparities in non-fiction literature. However, she does not propose priorities for English-to-Chinese translation of non-fiction literature based on its inherent features. In contrast, Zhang emphasizes the crucial importance of preserving exact contextual meaning, aligning with the author’s emphasis on the communicative dimension.

Li Yanhui (2015), Zhao Guoyue and Gao Xiaoxian (2016), and Ming Yawen (2018) adopt research

under the Skopos theory. Li and Ming respectively demonstrate that English-to-Chinese translation of non-fiction literature should adhere to the Skopos rule, coherence rule, and fidelity rule. Nevertheless, they refrain from offering specific suggestions for future translations in this genre. Similarly, Li Shan, Zhao and Gao analyze how methods such as literal translation and imitation contribute to achieving translation objectives concerning language style, structure, culture-laden words, and text style. Nonetheless, they do not proffer discernible priorities for translating non-fiction literature based on its hybrid nature. Likewise, Liu Bingyu's report (2019) discusses translation techniques but focuses on the perspective of three-dimensional transformations, serving as inspiration for the author's adoption of an Eco-Translatology approach to studying non-fiction literature translation.

In conclusion, the number of studies on non-fiction literature translation remains limited, with a dearth of research examining the translation of this genre from the perspective of Translation as Adaptation and Selection. Consequently, a substantial portion of non-fiction literature remains untranslated, thereby necessitating the formulation of effective translation methodologies by translators.

3. Theoretical Basis

Eco-Translatology, proposed by Hu Gengshen, examines translation from ecological perspectives, emphasizing Translation as Adaptation and Selection. Translators are chosen based on their fit for specific translations and audiences. They adapt and select elements during translation to create the final Target Text (TT). Eco-balance in translation achieves dynamic equilibrium in the translational eco-environment, considering multiple elements like the original writer, the client, the readers, and the cultural context. Translators aim for multi-dimensional adaptation and selection, using three-dimensional transformations as the method.

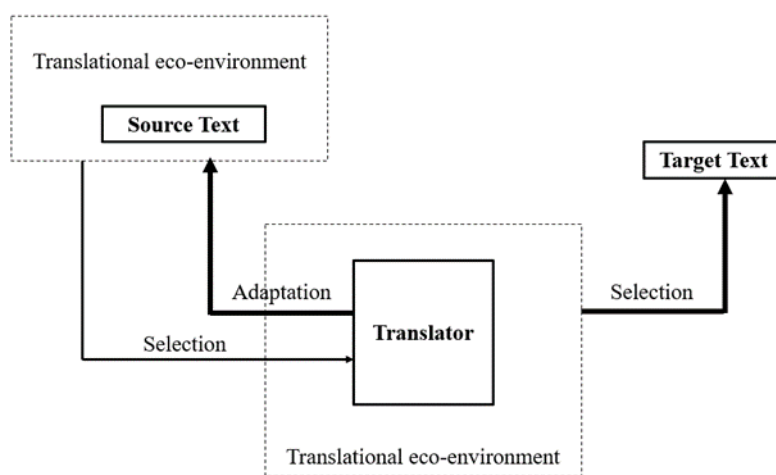


Figure 1. Translation as a Two-Stage Process: Adaptation and Selection

The ecological balance in Eco-Translatology refers to a dynamic equilibrium in the translational

eco-environment involving multiple elements: the translator, ST (source text), TT, original writer, client, readers, and cultural context (Zhang Xiaojun & Zhang Ruixue, 2014). Hu Gengshen (2004) emphasizes holistic adaptation and selection for the best translation, achieved by balancing various elements in the eco-environment, leading to eco-balance in translation. To realize eco-balance, translators should adopt multi-dimensional adaptation and selection as their principle and employ three-dimensional transformations.

Hu Gengshen (2004) suggests three reference values for assessing eco-balance: the degree of multi-dimensional transformations, reader feedback, and translator quality. Linguistic, cultural, and communicative elements are major components of multi-dimensional transformations, focusing on style transfer, cultural implications, and the original writer's intent, respectively. Reader's feedback considers the response of common readers, experts, clients, critics, etc., including print run, adaptation, and comments on the translation. Translator quality, involving bilingual ability, cross-cultural sensitivity, familiarity with the theme, and experience, plays a crucial role in determining translation quality for a given eco-environment.

4. Case Analysis

4.1 Assessment of Eco-Balance in Translation

The translation of *Shark's Fin and Sichuan Pepper* exemplifies a harmonious integration of five pivotal elements within its translational eco-environment: linguistic, cultural, and communicative factors, targeted readers, and the original writer. The translation has garnered positive market feedback, further reinforcing the translator's demonstrated quality through her previous work experience.

4.1.1 Degree of Multi-Dimensional Transformations

As expounded upon in Section 4.2, the Chinese rendition of *Shark's Fin and Sichuan Pepper* employs a diverse array of techniques, including addition, word class conversion, and the incorporation of feedback from the original writer and a select group of target readers prior to publication. The judicious application of these multifaceted translation strategies empowers the Chinese version of *Shark's Fin and Sichuan Pepper* to achieve a balanced synthesis among the three fundamental dimensions, while equally considering the interests of both target readers and the original writer as indispensable components in the translational eco-environment. Consequently, the Chinese rendition boasts a high degree of multi-dimensional transformations.

4.1.2 Reader's Feedback

The first translation of *Shark's Fin and Sichuan Pepper* was published by Owl Publishing House in 2012, while the latest version, translated by He Yujia, was released by Shanghai Translation Publishing House in 2018. Notably, He's rendition has garnered significant favour among Chinese readers, becoming the predominant version in the current book market of mainland China. On Douban.com, a website akin to Goodreads in China, He's version received 5-star and 4-star ratings from 31.8% and 51.4%, respectively, of the 29,480 raters. Likewise, on WeChat Read, a popular e-book reader app in

China, 78.1% of the 11,533 readers recommended He's Chinese version. Numerous readers on these platforms praised the translation's natural flow, likening it to the work of a native Chinese speaker. Remarkably, several Chinese readers even assumed the book was originally written in Chinese by a foreign author. Furthermore, acclaimed experts have lauded this version, leading to its nomination for the 4th One Way Street Book Award. In summary, He's translation has unequivocally garnered popularity among Chinese readers.

4.1.3 Translator Quality

Preceding the translation of *Shark's Fin and Sichuan Pepper*, He had undertaken other non-fiction literature translations, including "The Last Days of Old Beijing" and "In Manchuria," all of which received favourable market feedback. These translation experiences attest to He's bilingual proficiency and cross-cultural sensitivity to a considerable extent. Furthermore, being a Sichuan native with an innate passion for gastronomy, He boasts a profound familiarity with the Chinese food culture vividly portrayed in *Shark's Fin and Sichuan Pepper*, which predominantly unfolds in the province of Sichuan. Notably, He actively engaged with the writer, Fuchsia, during the translation process, with a mutual commitment to reader-oriented translation principles. This collaborative interaction even fostered a close friendship between them as He consulted Fuchsia on various translation inquiries. Additionally, to accurately reproduce the vivid scenes depicted by Fuchsia, He embarked on visits to individuals portrayed in the book and interacted with readers hailing from the Chinese provinces featured in the narrative. Her dedicated focus on heeding the guidance of the original writer and the readers exemplifies her meticulous and conscientious working ethos. In conclusion, He Yujia unequivocally emerges as a highly qualified translator for the task of rendering *Shark's Fin and Sichuan Pepper* into Chinese.

To conclude, founded upon the three reference benchmarks, the translator has masterfully achieved translational eco-balance in the Chinese version of *Shark's Fin and Sichuan Pepper*.

4.2 Approach to Eco-Balance in Translation

4.2.1 Discourse Featuring Informative Content

According to the literature review, non-fiction literature values the transfer of information based on facts. Terminology serves as a basic element to accurately explain facts, so its translation is of great significance. In the translation of terminology like ingredients and dish names, the translator achieves a high degree of holistic adaptation and selection by prioritizing certain elements in the translational eco-environment.

Example 1

ST: Eleven **lizards** have been partially skinned and then deep-fried (Fuchsia, 2009, p. 11).

TT: 十一只**蛤蚧 (大壁虎)** 被剥了部分的皮后下锅炸 (He Yujia, 2018, p. 16).

Example 2

ST: He finished the dish with a libation of fizzing hot oil that awakened the fresh fragrances of the onion and ginger, and then a slow, dark trickle of **soy sauce** (Fuchsia, 2009, p. 52).

TT: 他烧了热油, 淋在鱼身上, 更充分地唤醒了葱姜的香味; 接着在略略来了几滴豉油 (He Yujia, 2018, p. 133).

Example 3

ST: steamed **freshwater crabs** dipped in fragrant Zhejiang vinegar (Fuchsia, 2009, p. 20)

TT: 清蒸鲜活大闸蟹蘸香味扑鼻的浙醋 (He Yujia, 2018, p. 45)

The translator exhibits a discerning approach when dealing with common terms, opting not to rely solely on their most conventional equivalents in Chinese but rather selecting more specialized vocabulary that better aligns with the cultural context within the translational eco-environment. Additionally, the translator thoughtfully includes explanatory notes to cater to the knowledge framework of the intended target readers.

For instance, the term “lizard” is typically translated as “蜥蜴” or “壁虎” in this book, rather than “蛤蚧,” a word the translator does not explicitly justify. However, this study reveals that “蛤蚧” belongs to the medical domain and that lizards are abundant in the central region of China, including Hunan Province. Within the context, the original writer introduces a recipe featuring lizards in a cookery book penned by a chef from Hunan Province. Hence, the term “蛤蚧” is more contextually congruent with the culinary environment familiar to the original writer. Simultaneously, the translator demonstrates her attentiveness to the readers as an influential factor in the translational eco-environment, offering further clarification by appending “大壁虎” in parentheses after “蛤蚧” to facilitate comprehension for non-local readers.

Similarly, the translator departs from the common translation of “soy sauce” as “酱油” elsewhere in the book, instead opting for “豉油”. This choice is attributed to the fact that in this specific example, the cook prepares steamed fish, for which “蒸鱼豉油” or seasoned soy sauce for seafood is often used to impart an additional flavour to the dish. “豉油” is a more familiar expression to Chinese readers in such a context. This decision reflects the translator’s dedication to the readers’ receptiveness within the Chinese cultural setting.

Likewise, when translating “freshwater crabs,” the translator employs “大闸蟹” rather than the more common equivalent “淡水蟹,” as per standard dictionaries. This distinction arises as the original writer vividly depicts the pleasures of dining in cultural hubs such as Yangzhou and Hangzhou in the preceding sentence. Given that “大闸蟹” is renowned in the Yangtze River basin, it aligns more accurately with the translational environment. Additionally, in this example, the crabs are paired with vinegar from Zhejiang, which forms part of the Yangtze River basin. Therefore, “大闸蟹” is a more plausible interpretation for “freshwater crabs” in this context.

Throughout these examples, the translator prioritizes the communicative dimension within the translational eco-environment, seeking to discern the precise intended meaning of the original writer. Simultaneously, these adept translations adroitly adapt to the knowledge framework of the target readers within the broader Chinese cultural context, thereby accomplishing a successful transformation of the cultural dimension.

Example 4

ST: Actually, there were chillies everywhere: as a **dip** for aromatic duck hearts and livers, in the chilli oil drizzled over our chicken slivers; in the sauces for our pork and our eggplant (Fuchsia, 2009: 22).

TT: 其实辣椒无处不在: 卤鸭心肝的**蘸料 (干辣椒面)**、鸡丝上鲜艳欲滴的红油、猪肉和茄子的酱料 (He Yujia, 2018, p. 51).

Example 5

ST: *hui guo rou*, **marbled pork** stir-fried with Chinese leeks in an indescribably delicious chilli bean sauce (Fuchsia, 2009, p. 22)

TT: 回锅肉: **二刀肉 (后腿近臀部处)** 整块煮好, 切片后再配蒜苗爆炒, 调味用的是豆瓣酱, 那美味难以形容 (He Yujia, 2018, p. 51).....

To accurately translate technical terms, the translator engaged in thorough discussions with the original writer to discern the underlying intentions of the original text and fulfil the writer's communication demands. Simultaneously, the translator thoughtfully added explanatory notes to facilitate the understanding of the target readers.

During an interview on the TV program "Look West To Chengdu," the translator disclosed that she initially rendered "dip" as "蘸水". However, upon consultation with the original writer, the translator discovered that the dip referred not to a liquid but to chilli powder. To enhance the readers' comprehension of the ingredient, the translator provided an explanatory note within brackets, rendering it as "蘸料 (干辣椒面)," which conveys the notion of a dry substance, distinguishing it from the subsequent two examples of chilis in oil and liquid form. Through the addition of the note, the translator effectively conveys the original writer's intended meaning, which highlights the three different typical forms of chilis used as seasoning, thereby corroborating the statement "there were chillies everywhere." As such, "蘸料 (干辣椒面)" adeptly conveys the informative content present in non-fiction literature.

Similarly, the translator initially translated "the marbled pork" as "肥瘦相间的猪肉" but was unfamiliar with the term "二刀肉" until seeking clarification from the original writer during the book's translation. Following the writer's guidance, the translator replaced "肥瘦相间的猪肉" with the more specialized term "二刀肉." Recognizing that even as a gastronome, she had never encountered "二刀肉," the translator surmised that few ordinary Chinese readers would be familiar with the term as well. Consequently, she included an explanatory note in brackets, clarifying the position of the pork within a pig. By doing so, the translation accurately conveys the information without confusing the target readers. In these two instances, the translator adeptly balances the writer's advice and the readers' knowledge, successfully achieving communicative dimensional transformation.

In conclusion, to faithfully depict the informative content of this non-fiction literary work, the translator prioritizes the communicative dimension. Additionally, to ensure comprehensive information transfer, the translator judiciously considers the cultural dimension, diligently absorbing the original writer's guidance without compromising the comprehension of the target readers. These actions

underscore the translator's profound consideration for the target readers within the broader translational eco-environment.

4.2.2 Discourse Featuring Literary Content

As mentioned in the literature review, non-fiction literature stresses polished language like mastery of imagery, texture, colour and voice, etc. as well as the management of fictional devices such as suspense or a compelling narrative. In translating vivid descriptions of people and food in *Shark's Fin and Sichuan Pepper*, the translator adopts the conversion of word classes and uses four-character phrases and dialectical expressions. By doing so, the translator conveys the information and adapts to Chinese linguistic and cultural specificity as well as the knowledge of common readers.

Example 6

ST: It was my first trip to Asia, and I had rarely seen anything so revolting on a dinner table. They leered up at me like **the eyeballs of some nightmarish monster**, dark and **threatening**. Their **albumens** were a **filthy**, translucent brown, their **yolks** an oozy **black**, ringed with a layer of **greenish, mouldy** grey. About them hung a faintly sulphurous haze. I tried one, just to be polite, but its noxious aroma made me feel nauseous and I found it hard to swallow. Afterwards, a slick of toxic **black** slime from the yolk clung to my chopsticks, threatening to pollute everything else I ate. Surreptitiously, I tried to wipe them on the tablecloth (Fuchsia, 2009, p. 7).

TT: 那是我第一次去亚洲，之前几乎没见过晚餐桌上出现这么恶心的东西。这两瓣皮蛋好像在瞪着我，如同**闯入噩梦的魔鬼之眼**，幽深黑暗，闪着威胁的光。蛋白不白，是一种**脏兮兮**、半透明的褐色；蛋黄不黄，是一坨黑色的淤泥，周边一圈**绿幽幽的灰色**，**发了霉似的**。整个皮蛋笼罩着一种硫磺色的光晕。仅仅出于礼貌，我夹起一块放在嘴里，那股恶臭立刻让我无比恶心，根本无法下咽。之后，我的筷子上就一直沾着蛋黄上那**黑黢黢**、黏糊糊的东西，感觉再夹什么都会被污染。我一直偷偷摸摸地在桌布上擦着筷子 (He Yujia, 2018, p. 6).

In this specific instance, the original writer employs a series of evocative adjectives, such as “nightmarish,” “filthy,” and “black,” to portray preserved eggs, effectively conveying her strong aversion to the food. The translator adeptly showcases the writer's command of vivid imagery by utilizing the common Chinese idiom pattern “ABB.” For instance, the adjectives “green,” “black,” and “filthy” are rendered into “绿幽幽”，“黑黢黢”，and “脏兮兮” respectively. Among them, “nightmarish monster” draws from the old English term “mare”, referring to a mythological demon or goblin believed to ride on people's chests as they sleep, subjecting them to terrifying dreams. Notably, the translator refrains from utilizing annotations to explicate this cultural reference, which might be unfamiliar to common Chinese readers. Instead, she translates this adjective into “闯入噩梦的魔鬼”，signifying a monster that invades one's dreams and turns them into nightmares. In doing so, the translator deftly elucidates the meanings of these two words while effectively conveying the writer's emotional stance. In this case, the translator assigns priority to the linguistic and communicative dimensions over the cultural dimension. Ultimately, the translator succeeds in bringing the source text closer to the Chinese language, faithfully replicating the writer's linguistic prowess, and enabling

readers to conjure vivid and distinct mental images.

Example 7

ST: Hong Kong helped me to **cross the border gently. It was China in some ways, but in others, it wasn't.** I could meet English friends for a cocktail in the Captain's Bar at the Mandarin Oriental, or I could watch live fish being dismembered in the Wanchai wet market; I could window-shop in the glitzy designer boutiques of Central, or lose myself in the feverish backstreets of Kowloon. I remember, on that first trip, entering a Chinese temple, the Man-Mo, in the old Chinese trading district of Sheung Wan. In the **red-glowing, gold-gleaming,** cavern-like interior, old ladies **shook out their fortune-telling sticks and candles flickered.** The strange gilded statues and smouldering coils of incense brought me out in goose pimples.

TT: 香港帮我实现了“软着陆”。从某些方面来说,这里很“中国”;从另一些方面来看,又不“中国”。我可以在文华东方酒店的船长吧见见英国朋友、来杯鸡尾酒,也可以在湾仔的老市场亲眼目睹现杀活鱼;我可以在中环炫目耀眼的设计师流行精品店流连忘返,也能在九龙偏僻的老街巷中不知今夕何夕。我还记得第一次到香港时,进入传统华人贸易区上环的文武庙,里面**红墙金壁、闪闪发光**,仿佛另一个天地的洞穴;老太太们在**摇签问命、香烛摇曳、火光闪烁**,奇特的镀金铜像与氤氲环绕的烟气让我浑身起了层鸡皮疙瘩 (He Yujia, 2018, p. 434).

In this paragraph, the original writer deftly presents her light-hearted and humorous impression of Hong Kong. The translator skillfully replicates this tone by incorporating Chinese buzzwords and employing four-character phrases. For instance, the term “软着陆” is a Chinese rendition of “soft landing,” which commonly denotes a cyclical economic downturn that avoids a recession. In China, it is widely understood that the Chinese economy has been experiencing a soft landing, making “soft landing” or “软着陆” a familiar concept for Chinese readers. By using this fitting term, the translator effectively conveys the idea of “crossing the border gently”, signifying Hong Kong's role as a transitional space from Western to Chinese culture. Moreover, “软着陆” also underscores the notion of a gradual and steady approach.

The translator adeptly employs the pattern “这很+noun”, stemming from the Chinese meme “这很清真” that became viral prior to translating *Shark's Fin and Sichuan Pepper*. As a result, this translation effortlessly resonates with Chinese readers. Additionally, the translator employs four-character phrases such as “红墙金壁”, “闪闪发光”, “摇签问命”, “香烛摇曳”, and “火光闪烁” to translate “red-glowing,” “gold-gleaming,” “shook out their fortune-telling sticks and candles flickered,” respectively. These concise phrases, rich in Chinese characteristics, effectively convey the writer's admiration for the backstreets and vividly depict the temple's enigmatic aura.

In summary, the translator prioritizes the linguistic dimension within the translational eco-environment while also diligently considering the cultural context. By adroitly selecting Chinese buzzwords and employing expressive four-character phrases, the translator adeptly maintains the original writer's humorous and relaxed tone while ensuring resonance with the Chinese readership.

Example 8

ST: ‘If it doesn’t move, build on it’, Hong Kong people quip (Fuchsia, 2009, p. 173).

TT: 有个香港朋友曾戏谑地跟我说: “识郁, 食佢; 唔识郁, 砌佢。”

译者注: 粤语, 大意是“能动的就拿去吃掉, 不能动的就拿去盖房子” (He Yujia, 2018, p. 450).

Example 9

ST: Visiting a teahouse became so central to Hong Kong life that people began to greet one another by asking, ‘**Have you had tea yet?**’ instead of the more traditional, “**Have you eaten** (Fuchsia, 2009, p. 172)?”

TT: 去茶楼变成香港生活的重中之重, 熟人见面问候都会来一句 “**饮咗茶未吖**” 而不是比较传统的 “**食咗未**”

译者注: “饮咗茶未”意思是 “喝茶了吗”, “食咗未” 意思是 “吃了吗” (He Yujia, 2018, p. 447).

The translator exhibits impressive linguistic dexterity, being a native of Sichuan, and can seamlessly incorporate Sichuan dialects into her translations. However, she also deftly integrates Cantonese elements. In the postscript to the Chinese version of *Shark’s Fin and Sichuan Pepper*, the translator mentions creating a WeChat group to communicate with friends and former colleagues from Guangdong and Hong Kong. This endeavour aids her in accurately translating Cantonese expressions found in the book. As seen in previous examples involving Sichuan dialect pronouns, the translator employs the typical Cantonese pronoun “佢” (which means he, she, or it) in Example 15 and integrates Cantonese modal particles like “吖” and “未” in Example 9. Such dialectical nuances are likely to resonate with Cantonese readers, while non-Cantonese readers can also comprehend these expressions with the help of footnotes, thus easily envisioning the vivid scenes depicted by the original writer. By skillfully incorporating Cantonese into the translation, the translator achieves linguistic dimensional transformation without perplexing non-Cantonese readers.

In conclusion, the translator places priority on the linguistic dimension over the cultural dimension within the translational eco-environment, particularly concerning the literary aspects present in dialogues and narratives. However, she also adeptly realizes communicative dimensional transformation by providing clear explanations for the meanings of specific terms in the source text (ST). This thoughtful approach ensures an effective and engaging reading experience for both Cantonese and non-Cantonese readers alike.

4.2.3 Discourse Featuring Hybrid Content

Non-fiction literature is a hybrid art blending polished language and accurate information (Hollowell, 2011). The writer of *Shark’s Fin and Sichuan Pepper* demonstrates her fine linguistic skills and expansive knowledge through a large number of puns in titles and quotations from classics. Through multiple techniques including addition and annotation, the translator explains the puns of titles and quotations when retaining the flavour of the language in the book, achieving three-dimensional transformations.

Example 10

ST: Of Paw and Bone (Fuchsia, 2009, p. 4)

TT: 熊掌排骨，思甜忆苦 (He Yujia, 2018, p. 4)

In this chapter, the original writer eloquently portrays the stark contrast between the extravagant indulgence of China's wealthy, who savour rare delicacies like bear's paw, and the impoverished Chinese peasants, who resort to selling humble-looking pork bones for meagre earnings. Through her narrative, she conveys heartfelt sympathy for the plight of the rural poor in China. Furthermore, the writer vividly illustrates the countryside where older generations of urban dwellers are compelled to experience the toil and struggles of Chinese peasants, while the younger urban residents are now seeking respite from the frenetic pace of city life. This juxtaposition signifies the profound changes that have unfolded in China.

In terms of communicative dimensional transformation, akin to the preceding example, the translator deftly captures the chapter's thematic essence through amplification while preserving the core imagery from the source text (ST). “熊掌” and “排骨” are direct translations of “paw” and “bone,” respectively, which symbolize the contrasting circumstances of affluence and poverty. However, it is worth noting that both “熊掌” and “排骨” are considered luxury foods in China. If the title were rendered as “熊掌和排骨,” Chinese readers might not fully grasp the central idea of this chapter. By appending “思甜忆苦,” the translator artfully communicates not only the intergenerational comparison between urbanites but also alludes to the poignant contrast between the paw and the bone. As a result, the translator successfully conveys the author's intended message.

Regarding cultural dimensional transformation, the translator employs domestication to bring the title closer to the target language's culture by incorporating a four-character phrase. “思甜忆苦” is derived from the common Chinese idiom “忆苦思甜,” which denotes reminiscing about past hardships and cherishing present happiness. As a derivative, it resonates with Chinese readers, enabling them to anticipate a juxtaposition between the past and present.

Furthermore, in achieving linguistic dimensional transformation, the translator employs a rhyming effect in the title. Both “paw” and “bone” are monosyllabic words, sharing some phonetic similarities. Similarly, “骨” (gǔ) rhymes with “苦” (kǔ) as both possess the sound “u.” By rearranging the words in “忆苦思甜,” the translator artfully infuses a rhythmic cadence into the title, accentuating the literary charm of this non-fiction literary work.

Example 11

ST: Guilt and Pepper (Fuchsia, 2009, p. 4)

TT: 味麻心不麻 (He Yujia, 2018, p. 4)

In this chapter, the original writer recounts her journeys to two villages in search of the finest Sichuan pepper, renowned for its tantalizing sensation. However, she experienced a sense of guilt during her quest. This internal conflict arose from her indulgence in the food offered by local officials without making any payment, while the local farmers who produced the food continued to grapple with poverty. In a poignant turn of events, some farmers mistakenly thanked her, assuming she was another British woman dedicated to poverty alleviation in those regions.

In terms of communicative-dimensional transformation, the translator employs “味麻” to describe the taste of the pepper, which serves as the central focus of this chapter. Furthermore, “心不麻” captures the writer’s emotional state, alluding to her feelings of guilt. If the title were translated as “愧疚与花椒”, target readers might become perplexed, as there is no direct correlation between guilt and pepper. Through domestication, the translator adeptly conveys that the writer experienced guilt while searching for the pepper. By encapsulating the essence of the chapter in this title, the translator accomplishes effective communicative-dimensional transformation.

Regarding linguistic-dimensional transformation, the translator adopts a common Chinese phrase pattern “ABC 不 B” to render the translation more idiomatic and accessible to the target language audience. In Chinese, there are numerous examples of “ABC 不 B” phrases, such as “眼盲心不盲”) and “话糙理不糙”. Thus, target readers readily accept the expression “味麻心不麻”, skillfully crafted by the translator, enhancing the readability of the title.

As for cultural-dimensional transformation, there exists a similar phrase to “guilt and pepper” in English: “salt and pepper”, which refers to the flecked or speckled appearance of intermingled dark and light shades. This idiom is commonly associated with Western culinary culture, as the pairing of white salt and black pepper is a prevalent practice. Moreover, the idiom often symbolizes a stark contrast between black and white. The writer seemingly utilizes the title derived from this idiom to imply a comparison between her emotional state and the tingling sensation of Sichuan pepper. In a way, “guilt and pepper” corresponds to “味麻心不麻”, as both bear a resemblance to a set phrase. Meanwhile, “味麻心不麻” also features a clear contrast, indicating that the writer’s tongue savours an enjoyable tingling sensation, while her heart remains unsettled. Through domestication, the translator effectively conveys this similarity and contrast in terms of the cultural dimension.

Example 12

ST: “The cook blends the ingredients”, said the statesman Yanzi in a text compiled more than 2000 years ago, ‘and equalizes them by taste, adding whatever is deficient and decreasing whatever is excessive. His master then eats it and thereby composes his mind. The relationship between lord and vassal also is like this (Fuchsia, 2009, p. 187) ...’

TT: 两千多年前，政治家晏子撰文道，“齐之以味，济其不及；以泄其过，君子食之，以平其心。君臣亦然……”

译者注：这段文字引用子《左传》中的《晏子对齐侯问》，应用文字的大意是，“厨工调配味道，使各种味道恰到好处；味道不够就增加调料，味道太重就减少调料。君子吃了这种肉羹，用来平和心性。国君和臣下的关系也是这样 (He Yujia, 2018, p. 488) ……”

Example 13

ST: Confucius, who lived in the fifth century BC, was as cultivated in his eating habits as he was in other aspects of his life: ‘his rice is not excessively refined, and his sliced meat is not cut excessively fine. Rice that has become putrid and sour, fish that has spoiled, and meat that has gone bad, he does not eat. Undercooked foods he does not eat, and foods served at improper times he does not eat. Meat

that is improperly carved, he does not eat, and if he does not obtain the proper sauce, he will not eat (Fuchsia, 2009, p. 188).’

TT: 而公元前五世纪的孔子不仅生活上各个方面十分讲究, 饮食习惯也是极尽繁琐: ”食不厌精, 脍不厌细。食饕而謁, 鱼馁而肉败, 不食; 色恶, 不食; 恶臭, 不食; 失饪, 不食; 不时, 不食; 割不正, 不食; 不得其酱, 不食。”

译者注: 出自《论语》, 引用文字的大意是, ”食物不嫌做得精, 鱼肉不嫌切得细。食物变质馊臭, 鱼肉腐烂, 不吃。颜色难看, 不吃。气味难闻, 不吃。火候不当, 不吃。不是时候, 不吃。切得不合刀法, 不吃 (He Yujia, 2018, p. 488).”

As the cited paragraphs are originally written in ancient Chinese, common target readers may struggle to grasp their meaning if the translator simply reproduces the exact original text in translation. Hence, the translator wisely incorporates footnotes to elucidate the intended meaning. Furthermore, the translator takes the initiative to provide additional information by clarifying the sources of these proverbs in the footnotes, even when the original writer only vaguely mentions the paragraph as being from “a text” in Example 12 and omits any specific source reference in Example 13. Through this thoughtful approach, the translator effectively preserves the linguistic essence of these ancient Chinese proverbs without perplexing the target readers, while simultaneously enriching their comprehension of the source text and fostering cultural immersion. In accomplishing these three-dimensional transformations, the translator ensures a seamless fusion of linguistic, cultural, and communicative elements.

In conclusion, to preserve the distinctive hybrid nature of non-fiction literature, the translator skillfully orchestrates linguistic, cultural, and communicative transformations, thereby achieving an eco-balance in translation.

5. Conclusion

The present study adopts the Translation as an Adaptation and Selection framework to analyze the English-to-Chinese translation strategies employed in the non-fiction literature genre, exemplified by *Shark's Fin and Sichuan Pepper*. The following key findings emerge from this investigation:

Regarding informative content, the translator places significant emphasis on the communicative and cultural dimensions. Conversely, for literary content, the focus is directed towards the linguistic and communicative dimensions. This approach ensures the preservation of the genre's hybrid nature through triple-dimensional transformations. Notably, the translator prioritizes the communicative dimension to effectively convey the original writer's intended message to the target readers. Adaptation mainly revolves around the elements of the source text, the original writer, and the target readership, with particular attention given to the communicative dimension. The translator proactively incorporates suggestions from the original writer to enhance translation accuracy.

discourse type	prioritized dimensions	
informative	communicative	cultural
literary	linguistic	communicative
hybrid	triple	

Figure 2. Prioritized Dimensions Based on Discourse Type

Based on these findings, the study puts forward several suggestions for English-to-Chinese translation of non-fiction literature. Firstly, embracing language creativity is advised to facilitate transformations across multiple dimensions. Secondly, the communicative dimension should take precedence in most cases to ensure effective communication of the intended meaning. Lastly, when addressing other dimensions, consideration of the discourse type becomes crucial. Throughout the translation process, the target readership's preferences and comprehension level should remain a significant consideration. Future research endeavours on non-fiction literature translation could potentially involve the use of corpora to explore additional examples and further investigate the intricate relationship between linguistic and cultural dimensions to achieve harmonious balance among all three dimensions. As cultural exchanges continue to flourish on a global scale, one can anticipate the emergence of more high-quality English-to-Chinese translations of non-fiction literature in the foreseeable future. The author remains hopeful for ongoing progress and advancement in this field.

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