Original Paper

A Study of Fang Huawen's Chinese Version of *Rebecca* from the Perspective of Skopos Theory

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Abstract

This paper analyzes Fang Huawen's Chinese version of Rebecca from the perspective of Skopos Theory. By obtaining the different descriptions in the novel, such as linguistic description, mental description, and environmental description, the essay focuses on discovering how the translator uses Skopos Theory during his translation. Through the analysis, the thesis finds out that Fang's version combines the features of the original texts and the expression habit in Chinese, which fully demonstrates the original texts. The language of Fang's version is brief and clear, and the content is coherent, meanwhile, this translation showcases the message from the original text to a great extent. Through studying Fang's version, the thesis analyzes the translation strategies comprehensively by using the principle of fidelity, conference and skopos. Based on the above three principles, translators can adopt a variety of translation strategies, including domestication, foreignization, addition and subtraction, to translate high-quality translations to meet the needs of readers and disseminate the culture of other countries.

Keywords

Rebecca, Skopos Theory, Chinese version, Translation Strategy

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

Gothic originally refers to the Goths, belonging to the Germanic tribes of Western Europe. Then people refer to Gothic architecture which has towered minarets, heavy stone walls, stained glasses, dark interiors and inside. In the late 18th century, people used the word "Gothic" to name a new genre of fiction. This type of fiction usually takes place in castles, ruins, or wilderness; there is a lot of intrigue, revenge, murder, and violent story lines in the story, often accompanied by ghosts or other mysterious forces; the atmosphere of the novel is eerie, terrifying, and full of suspense. As one of the oldest and most studied

forms of 'genre' or 'formula fiction.' The Gothic novel started around the middle of the 18th century in Great Britain and encompassed novels and stories that could be described as a mix of horror, mystery, adventure, psychological thriller, and historical fiction. The Gothic novel was invented almost single-handedly by Horace Walpole, whose *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) contains all the elements that constitute the genre. In the study of English literature, the Gothic novel has been neglected as it is regarded as a tributary of the development of the English novel. As one of the ferments for the occurrence of the English Thrill Novel, its influence is still today.

As one of the hottest translation theories in recent years, Skopos Theory pays attention to the target reader's needs and chooses specific methods according to different purposes. This Theory coincides with the translation of literature text. The result of CNKI research showcases that more and more translations of literal texts about Skopos Theory in China is increasing. However, the study of Gothic novel is still lacking. The author chooses *Rebecca* as the target text to provide more experience for the strategic selection of the Gothic novel.

To sum up, the author chooses the Gothic novel *Rebecca* as the translation object and the Skopos Theory as the guiding Theory, looking forward to upgrading her knowledge and providing more Theory examples for Chinese study on Skopos Theory.

1.2 Background Knowledge about Daphne Du Marine and Rebecca

Daphne Du Marine, Lady Browning, was awarded the Order of the Lady of the British Empire. She is also a member of the Royal Society of Literature. As a romantic novelist, her stories have been described as "moody and resonant" with overtones of the paranormal. Commented by the critic Kate Kellaway:

"Du Maurine was mistress of calculated irresolution. She did not want to put her readers' minds at rest. She wanted her riddles to persist. She wanted the novels to continue to haunt us beyond their endings."

Rebecca by Daphne Du Marine was first published in 1938. The publication was an immediate hit, selling nearly 3 million copies between 1938 and 1965. In the United States, du Maurier won the National Book Award for favorite novel of 1938, voted by members of the American Booksellers Association. In the UK, it was listed as number 14 of the "nation's best-loved novels" on the BBC's 2003 survey The Big Read.

Today, more than a hundred versions of *Rebecca* are published in more than 20 countries. As a typical masterpiece of the Gothic novel, *Rebecca* has also been filmed by many directors, such as Alfred Hitchcock (1940), Jim O'Brien (1997), and Ben Wheatley (2020). The Hungarian composer Lévay Szilveszter (Sylvester Levay) also compiled it as a German musical (2006) and then others adapted it into Korean, Hungarian, and Japanese. The study of *Rebecca* never stops; many people analyze this book from different visions. The first press to translate *Rebecca* in Chinese as 《蝴蝶梦》 is Yilin Press when they translated *Rebecca* in 1994. After that, this Chinese book name is always used by different authors when they are translating *Rebecca.* As Lu (2016) states that among all the existing Chinese versions of *Rebecca,* only the versions of Lin Zhiling & Chengde (1994) and Fang Huawen (2000) are officially authorized.

To better analyze the methods while Fang Huawen translated Rebecca, the author needs to pay attention to the two women characters in the novel, "I" and "Rebecca." Even though obviously the main character in the novel "I" has all the characteristics that typical positive character has, she is just the narrator in the novel. The character Daphne Du Marine wants to describe is Rebecca, who is never shown in the novel; the information about her depends on the narrator and others. Different narrated visions make the novel contain mystery and leave more space for readers to imagine the real protagonist, Rebecca. During the analysis of the translation version, only if the reader delivers the different stance of each people in the novel, the inside of the novel can be shown.

1.3 Introduction to Fang Huawen

Fang Huawen translates novels from English to Chinese. Praised by UNESCO as "the most productive literary translator in contemporary China" (Babel), Fang Huawen is the representative personage in the literary translation in China. There are over a thousand literary works he has written and translated. His unique understanding of the social effect and political function is showcased in his vision of translation "Red China, Red Translation." Professor Fang Huawen's view of translation has attracted wide attention worldwide. In 2008, Babel, the academic journal of the International Federation of Translators and Interpreters, published a paper that introduced his translation thoughts so that the world could understand the general translation situation in China, the characteristics of the translation industry, and his unique insights.

2. Literature Review

Skopos theory flourished in Germany around the 1970s. Once upon a time, lots of scholars used it as the main theory while they analyzed different types of texts. Unlike the traditional "equivalent view", the Skopos theory does not focus on whether the target text is the same as the original text or whether the target text is translated extremely accurately, but rather focuses on whether the translator chooses the best processing method to analyze the original text. That is the choice of translation strategy is in the judgment of the target population and the purpose of translation. In a word, translators must be able to apply suitable methods in the process of translating (Zhang, 2004). Recently, the research on literature novels under the perspective of Skopos theory is increasing. However, as an important part of the literature novel, the translation study of Gothic novels is still not efficient. This essay is focused on the translation study of the famous Gothic novel *Rebecca.*

2.1 Overseas Research

As the central concept of German functionalist translation theory, the study of Skopos theory began in Germany by Vermeer (1987) and Reiss (2000). Vermeer divides Skopos theory into three fundamental rules: Skopos rule, conference rule and fidelity rule. The Skopos rule is the most important rule among these rules. In Vermeer's approach, translation is a form of translation action based on a source text, which may consist of verbal and/or non-verbal elements (illustrations, plans, tables, etc.). Other forms of translation action may involve actions such as a consultant giving information. (Nord, 2018) After that,

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Holz-Mänttäri, a Finland-based German professional translator, translation scholar, and teacher of prospective professional translators, helps Skopos theory develop further. Nord is also an important scholar of Skopos theory. She comes up with the function plus royalty theory for Skopos theory and uses English to explain Skopos theory first. Meanwhile, she also points out the limitation of the Skopos theory.

2.2 Domestic Research

Although China's research on Skopos theory started late, it still attaches great importance to it, and the research on Skopos theory is gradually on the rise. Since its introduction to China, translation teleology has had a positive and far-reaching impact on China's translation research and promoted the vigorous development of China's translation research.

According to J.S. Holmes (1972) and supplemented by G.Toury (1995), classification translation research can be basically divided into pure theoretical research and applied translation research. Theoretical research can also be divided into descriptive translation research and theoretical translation research. Fan Xiangtao and Liu Quanfu (2002), Zhong Weihe (1999), Yang Yingming (2001) and others mainly introduced the formation and development of functional translation theory and teleology, as well as its main contents and principles, which belongs to the category of purely theoretical research. Tang Mengjie and Liu Yang (2023), Li Yu (2023), Zhang Qingxin (2023) and others applied the teleology in functional theory to the analysis of the translation of literary works in the article. Authors of multiple articles either apply theory to literary translation research or use literary text examples to verify the applicability of theory, which belongs to the category of applied translation research. The three articles of Zhang Jinghua (2003), Hong Ming (2006) and Kang Cui Chain (2014) focus on analyzing the application of teleology in the advertising translation, which also belongs to the category of applied translation research.

The domestic research on Skopos theory is quite comprehensive, both theoretical and applied research. The authors who focus on the article between the two are more inclined to choose the translation of a literary work as the research object.

The research of *Rebecca* is also a hot subject among Chinese scholars in recent years. As a typical Gothic novel, many authors choose multiple theories to analyze this novel from different aspects. And the Fang Huawen's version is the main example while other studies in *Rebecca*. However, from the perspective of translation, there are a few people who use the Skopos Theory to analyze it, which gives the author an entry point to combine the Skopos Theory with the translation of *Rebecca*.

In short, both scholars from China and abroad make lots of achievements in the study of Skopos theory. This paper attempts to conduct in-depth research on the Chinese translation of the English version of the Gothic novel *Rebecca* from the perspective of Skopos theory.

3. Framework

3.1 Overviews of Skopos Theory

Skopos theory was first established by German theorists Hans Vermeer and Katharina Reiss as a professional translation technical term. Skopos is a noun derived from its original Greek word, "Skopós,"

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which means 'purpose' and 'aim'. From the original meaning, we can see that Skopos Theory insists that the purpose is fundamental to translation. During the translation, the main point is to show the main aim that the author wants to express is under the needs of readers. There are four stages of the development of Skopos theory.

From *Translation Criticism - The Potentials & Limitations* (*Moglichkeiten und Grenzen dertibersetungsktitik*), Reiss mentioned that the Translation Criticism must be based on the comparison of ST (source text) and TT (target text). According to her, the ideal translation would be one "in which the aim in the TL is equivalence as regards the conceptual content, linguistic form and communication function of a SL text" which is called "integral communicative translation". (Nord, 2018, p. 21) She believes that the first step in translation is to identify the type of text and select an appropriate translation method, the second step is to identify the textual variants of the original text, and the third step is to analyze the style of the original text. In conclusion, when translating expression texts, the aesthetics and artistic forms of the original should be preserved in the translation. (Liu, p. 9)

Vermeer is the student of Reiss. In *Framework for General Translation Theory*, the Skopos theory was published for the first time. The book is the foundation of Skopos Theory which clearly shows the idea that TT depends on the purpose of the ST and translation is a form of human action. He also wrote a book with Reiss together—*Towards a General Theory of Translational Action,* which explains the details of Skopos Theory. Vermeer (1987) maintains that translation should reflect the reader's cultural environment so that the target readers can accept it. Or else the translation has come to nothing if those readers cannot understand it culturally, hence cultural communication fails. In addition to the text type and translation purpose of the Gothic novel, the colloquial and horrible atmosphere should also be considered, to provide readers with a lively and interesting translation. At the same time, the background knowledge and comprehension ability of readers should be considered, during the translation process, so as not to destroy the atmosphere of the original text, but also to help readers better understand the Gothic.

Justa, a student of Reiss, built her theory on the rules of behavioral theory, arguing that human behavior is purposeful and that the primary purpose of translating is to provide functionally appropriate communicative behavior that covers more than the traditional definition of translation. (Chen, p. 18) In a word, Justa's theory of translation behavior is based on the theoretical basis of language communication, information theory, language use and social culture, and at the same time, she has made creative innovations according to the needs of translation Skopos theory. (Liu, p. 9) After she came up with this idea, Vermeer combined their thinking to improve the Skopos theory.

Nord is the scholar who comprehensively analyzes the Skopos theory and expands it in English. She summarizes all thoughts from different schools and comes up with her thinking: function plus loyalty, which improves the theory. She proposed documentary translation and instrumental translation based on Skopos theory and the role of text in the target language culture.

Documentary translation emphasizes the direct generation of the source text and records the information contained in the original text without considering the context of the target language. It emphasizes that

the role of the translator is to act as the author of the original language and to communicate with the recipient about the culture of the original language. She further divided it into four types: line-by-line translation, word-by-word translation, philological translation, and exotic translation. Instrumental translation refers to the translation of the target language text to achieve different functions in the target language culture. Its main features are meaning to reflect the function of the original text as much as possible, discover other functions of the text, and replace the effect of the original text. Instrumental translation is a kind of translation carried out to adapt to the cultural norms of the target language, which means that translation is functional, and that translation is regarded as a tool or means to achieve an end. Nord herself believes that instrumental translation is more suitable for functionalist teleology. In addition, Nord realized that people are sensitive to the faithfulness of translation and proposed the concept of loyalty. She proposed that, from the technical point of view of translation, faithfulness is the technical relationship between the original text and its actual meaning, while loyalty is an ethical and moral rule in translation. Some translators sometimes need a kind of moral loyalty, that is, not to deceive the reader, to understand the reader's reading, and to look forward to the career and reading experience, which is loyalty to the reader. (Liu, p. 9)

3.2 Three Rules of Skopos Theory

There are three basic rules of Skopos Theory. As the highest rule of the Skopos theory, the Skopos rule shows the basic principle of the Skopos theory, which is "A translation action is governed by its purpose" (Vermeer & Reiss, p. 104). There are three solutions of the Skopos: the purpose of the translator, the communicative purpose of the text and the purpose that can be achieved by using special translation methods. Therefore, the language habits and modes of thought of the target readers are particularly important. The conference rule and fidelity rule are the special rules of the Skopos Theory. The conference rule must fit intratextuality conference and the fidelity rule must fit intertextual conference. The TT must be fidelity to the ST, but the form depends on the author. In the translation process, we must emphasize the rigor of translation. Because translators can easily convey their misunderstandings to others. Although Skopos theory emphasizes the reader's perspective, the original text is also the focus. Therefore, its principle of loyalty is an important principle of functional teleology.

The relationship between the above three rules is that the rule of fidelity is subordinate to the rules of coherence, which in turn is subordinate to the rules of purpose. (Chen, p. 26) Translators should follow these three rules in the translation process to ensure that the translation is accurate, semantically coherent, and conforming to the expression norms of the target language.

4. Typical Case Analysis under the Perspective of Skopos Theory

4.1 Characteristics of Text Type

Rebecca written by Marine is a typical Gothic novel. They are not only famous for the author and various horrible environment writings in the novels but also appreciated by Chinese and foreign fans of Gothic novels for the different kinds of characters in the novel. As we all know, the typical features of Gothic

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novels are Vampires, ghosts and so on. Marine gave up the typical way while she wrote the book. She used a lot of environmental description and conversation to set off a horrible sphere. Meanwhile, there are many proper nouns about biology which the translator should pay attention to. And the main character Rebecca, although she is dead but does not exist as a ghost in the novel, readers can still feel the horror atmosphere during reading. When the translator does his job, the hardest work is how to express in Chinese to let readers understand and immerse themselves in the story. Fang Huawen used many kinds of verbs during his translation and readers can clearly see his handling methods while he meets puns or colloquialism in the novel. The author will analyze those fancy phrases in the book by using Skopos Theory. This is not only a good way to understand Skopos Theory, but also a great chance to learn more about Western civilization.

4.2 Analyze Cases form the Skopos Theory

There are many great examples in the book. So, what does Fang Huawen do when he translates *Rebecca* from English to Chinese?

4.2.1 Analyze the Case by Skopos Rule

As the common rule of Skopos Theory, we can see that there are many sentences are translated under this rule. There are many parts of the environmental description that use free translation. Interpretation refers to the process of translating the translator according to the content of the original text and his understanding of the original text. Interpretation does not refer to the translator's simple literal translation of the original novel. When part of the content and form of the original text are not easy to be directly expressed in Chinese, the translator can use free translation to convey the original text of the novel to the reader in another form.

Example 1:

ST: "A lilac had mated with a copper beech, and to bind them yet more closely to one another the malevolent ivy, always an enemy to grace, had thrown her tendrils about the pair and made them prisoners."

TT: "一株紫丁香和铜红山毛榉结为伴侣，而素来以美为敌的常青藤伸展开蔓须，恶毒地将它们绑在一起，使这一对情侣沦为俘虏"

It shows clearly that Fang Huawen prefers to use personification when he translates environmental description in the ST. Anthropomorphic descriptions allow readers to immersive feel the impact of the environment on the characters. Meanwhile, Through anthropomorphic descriptions, the translation shows readers a vivid picture like the reader is watching them. The author personifies lilac and vividly shows how different plants are intertwined with each other. However, if you directly translate the meaning of the original text step by step, it will make the language a little cumbersome and not have literary aesthetics. Fortunately, the translator does not translate word for word according to the original text, but cleverly adopts the method of free translation.

Example 2:

ST: The illusion went with it, and the lights in the windows were extinguished.

TT: 刚才的幻景顿然消失，窗子里的灯火也随之熄灭。

In this sentence, the author uses a literal translation method. The author uses "顿然" and "随之" these two verbs to vividly show the scene in which "I" gets rid of the illusion. This sentence makes readers wonder what happened in the protagonist's home through a sudden change of scene, casting a layer of mystery on the story. The translator demonstrates the two purposes of the original text through the use of verbs: first, to elicit the existence of Manderley, and second, to reveal the mystery and other characters that exist in the story. This sentence is the foreshadowing of the next chapter.

4.2.2 Analyze the Case by Conference Rule

During the translation action, the necessary process is to let readers understand what the author wants to express. The translator must consider the cultural differences, in this way he can translate the text that the readers will accept.

Example 3:

ST: His quality of detachment was peculiar to himself, and I knew that we might continue thus, without speaking, throughout the meal and it would not matter. There would be no sense of strain. He would not ask me questions on history.

TT: 孤高是他独特的个性，我觉得我们可能会一声不响地默默吃完这顿饭。这对我无所谓，我不会感到紧张，他也不会问我历史方面的知识。

This is a psychological description of the protagonist. Fang uses the principle of coherence in Skopos Theory has adjusted the order of this sentence, making the translation of this sentence more literary and aesthetic. At the same time, it reveals the protagonist's psychology at this stage, paving the way for the future emotional development of the two. In the process of translating the article, the author split and reorganized the sentences many times, making the Chinese version more closely connected when reading.

Example 4:

ST: My shyness fell away from me, loosening as it did so my reluctant tongue, and out they all came, the little secrets of childhood, the pleasures and the pains.

TT: 我的羞耻感飞到了爪哇国，不愿讲话的舌头也随之松动。于是儿童时代的小秘密以及各种悲喜泉涌而出。

The translator still splits the sentences here. But for me, the highlight of the translation here is "爪哇国". There is no such expression like "爪哇国" in English. It is a unique Chinese vocabulary. The author uses this word to vividly express the inner changes of the protagonist and also makes readers in this country feel close to the text. Regarding the principle of coherence, I think the most important thing is to use the native language to express the vitality of the foreign language text, which is indispensable in translation.

4.2.3 Analyze the Case by Fidelity Rule

Example 5:

In Skopos Theory, there is a principle of fidelity. In the translation of novels, people often advocate that the translation is consistent with the original text. Among them, literal translation can do this well. Literal translation is a common method in literary translation. Literal translation can directly convey the

meaning of the original text and retain the rhetorical style of the original text to the greatest extent so that the translation has a similar language effect to the original text. The literal translation method is also widely used in the environmental description translation of Rebecca.

ST: I can tell by the way he will look lost and puzzled suddenly, all expression dying away from his dear face as though swept clean by an unseen hand, and in its place a mask will form, a sculptured thing, formal and cold, beautiful still but lifeless."

TT: "从他的一举一动我可以看出来。他常常在突然之间就显得茫然困惑，可爱的脸上所有的表情都消失得一干二净，仿佛被一只看不见的手一把抹去，取而代之的是一副面具模型、一件雕塑品，呆板且冰冷，仍然英俊潇洒，但没有一丝生气。"

The author uses a literal translation method for this sentence. However, during the translation process, he divided one sentence into two sentences, so that the Chinese version did not appear too delayed and the connection between the texts was strengthened. This sentence shows that Manderley's past still haunts the two protagonists, making the reader want to explore their lives before Manderley even more. It casts a bit of mystery into the article.

Example 6:

ST: She babbled on, impervious. "Of course you miss the fogs at Manderley; it's quite another matter; the west country must be delightful in the spring.

TT: 范・霍珀夫人却不闻不问地喋喋不休继续说道："当然，你一定很留恋曼德利的浓雾，那是种独特的景色。西部乡村在春天一定令人心旷神怡。

The author combines language and action in this paragraph to skillfully show the image of a stupid lady. At the same time, Manderley is shown to us from the perspective of a third person, which contrasts with the slightly terrifying atmosphere in the front, reminding readers that the story is slowly unfolding.

5. Conclusions

Through the analysis of Rebecca, the author not only realizes how laborious the literature translation is, but also knows more about Skopos Theory, which strengthens her love of translation career. In the future, she will continue the study of Skopos Theory and improve her translation ability. Chinese vocabulary translation based on Skopos Theory is conducive to accurately conveying the content of literary texts and is also conducive to enriching the vocabulary reserves of English learners.

5.1 Significance

The progress of translation activities is not only the exchange of language symbols on the surface, but also the exchange of culture and ways of thinking at a deeper level. (Yuan, 2017) As international exchanges continue to deepen, literary translation has gradually become an important tool for cultural exchanges between countries. In different literary texts, the same words may express different meanings, which must be paid attention to in text analysis. Skopos Theory is one of the most important translation theories. Many scholars use it as the main theory to analyze different texts. There are three main principles of Skopos theory: Skopos rules, coherence rules, and fidelity rules. Among them, the Skopos

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rule is the primary principle, and the other two principles are subordinate to the principle of teleology. The author knows more about Skopos Theory while writing this paper, and hopes to explore more in the future study. And this is also a good chance to learn literature text.

5.2 Limitations

First, the knowledge about the Skopos theory of the author is insufficient. Her knowledge of Skopos theory is not enough, which means the analysis of the text might be inadequate. Meanwhile, many scholars pay attention to the analysis of the translation of the literature text. The author needs to be very careful when she analyzes.

Secondly, the preparation work could be done better. There are many derivative works of *Rebecca*. At the beginning of the analysis, the author is influenced by them but ignores the importance of the original text which leads to a little misunderstanding of the texts.

Finally, when reading relevant literature and other essays about *Rebecca*, the translator realized that how to analyze the translation of horrible language such as environmental description is a major problem. In the future, the author will continue the study of Gothic novels.

In short, the author will carry on further study on this topic with more systematical translation theory. If this thesis can give a guideline for further studies on Gothic novel translation which will be very pleasure for the author. Other scholars about Gothic novel translation should make a deep exploration on the Skopos Theory.

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