

Original Paper

The Influence of Translators' Multiple Identities on the Image Construction of Translated Texts -- Taking Two Translations of Li Qingzhao's Poetry as an Example

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Abstract

Based on “Translator's Multiple Identities Model” proposed by Zhao Qiurong and Sun Peizhen, translators have multiple social identities, which are divided into primary, secondary and final identities according to the hierarchy. This paper takes two translations of Li Qingzhao's poetry as examples, one co-translated by American poet Kenneth Rexroth and Chinese scholar Chung Ling, another translated by Manfield Zhu's translation, to explore how the translator's primary, secondary, and final identities influence translator's behavior and images of translated works, in order to provide new ideas for the research of translator's identity. It is found that the images portrayed by the in-coming translator, Rexroth, have more cultural characteristics of the target language, while the images portrayed by the out-going translator, Manfield Zhu, retain more Chinese cultural characteristics.

Keywords

Multiple Social Identities, Image Construction, Li Qingzhao's Poetry, In-coming Translator, Out-going Translator

1. Introduction

In the report of the 20th National Congress of the CPC, General Secretary Xi (2022) pointed out: “We should promote civilization exchanges, and accelerate the speed of spreading Chinese culture to the world.” English translation of canonical books meets the demand of The Times. Li Qingzhao is one of China's most respected and influential female poets. The English translation of her works facilitates the

dissemination of Chinese culture overseas. The existed research on the English translation of Li Qingzhao's poems mainly focuses on some old versions, such as Kenneth Rexroth's version (Feng & Wang, 2022), Kenneth Rexroth and Chung Ling's co-translated version (Ge, 2016; Feng & Wang, 2022), and Yang Hsien-yi and Gladys B. Tayler's version (Zhao, 2014). There is a lack of research on new versions. There are comparative studies of different translated versions, but they mainly focus on translation strategies. Feng Quangong, Wang (2022) comparatively studied the transformation of translation strategies between the version translated independently by Kenneth Rexroth and the co-translated version translated by Kenneth Rexroth and Chung Ling. Zhang (2014) analyzed the translation strategies used in the sixteen English translations of the poetry of Li Qingzhao. Li and Ji (2014) explored the translation strategies utilized in the translations by Xu Muyu, Ye Weilian, Ouyang Zhen and Kenneth Rexroth. There is a lack of research from new perspectives. This paper takes Kenneth Rexroth and Chung Ling's joint translation and Manfield Zhu's translation as the objects to explore the influence of translator's multiple identities on the image construction of the translation.

2. Research on Translators' Multiple Identities and the Images of Translated Works

According to social identity theory, identities can be categorized into “personal identity” and “multiple identity” (Tajfel, 1971). Personal identity is entirely determined by the individual himself, involving individual's cognition, association, memory, etc.; multiple identity refers to identity generated by interaction with the external environment and stimulation by external factors, such as social identity, cultural identity, etc. (Hogg et al., 2003). Social identity theory not only defines the multiplicity of identities, but also points out the hierarchical and sequential nature of multiple identities. Different identities are arranged from high to low according to a certain pattern, and the higher the rank, the greater the relationship with individual behavioral choices and the more likely it is to have an impact on individual behavior (Oakes, 1987). The research results of sociology provide reference for the study of translators' identity. The exploration of different identities of translators is becoming an important way to study the behavior of translators and the image portrayal of translations. Xu (2018) explored the influence of Cao Cao's translator identity on the translation process from perspective of Moss Roberts's translator identity, taking the portrayal of Cao Cao in the translated text as an example. Zhao & Sun (2024) put forward “Translator's Multiple Identities Model”, which is guided by the primary, secondary and final identities. Each identity affects the fidelity, accuracy, and accessibility of the translated text through respective paths, and ultimately results in different translator behaviors. Chen (2013) studied two Chinese translations of *Lolita* from the perspectives of translator's gender identity and the reconstruction of the characters in the translations, and came to the conclusion that the gender identity is particularly working in the translators' reconstruction of the characters in the literary works. Zhang (2018) found that translator's subjectivity changes the image of women in the translated text to varying degrees.

Translation orientation is an old topic in Western translation studies. In-coming translators translate texts from the foreign language to mother language, while out-going translators translate texts from mother language to foreign languages (Beeby, 2009). Due to the different directions of translation, there are some differences in the linguistic features and styles of in-coming and out-going translations (Zhao, 2019). At present, most studies still focus on the professional identity of translators (He et al., 2020), and there are fewer studies on the translator's behavior based on the translator's multiple social identities and roles, especially in the study of English translation of canonical books, and there are few studies on the multiple identities of in-coming and out-going translators (Nie et al., 2022).

3. Analysis of Translators' Multiple Identities on the Images of Translated Works

The two translations selected in this paper are a joint translation, *Li Ch'ing-chao, Complete Poems*, by the American poet Rexroth and the Chinese scholar Chung Ling and *Complete Collection of Li Qingzhao's Poetry Translated by Manfield Zhu* by the Chinese translator Manfield Zhu. Chung (2003) referred to the translations of Chinese poems by Pound, Kenneth Rexroth and others as "creative translations", in which the translations express aesthetic experiences and present their subjective feelings about Chinese poems in beautiful English. Chung Ling once said, "Kenneth Rexroth is like a kite, and my role is pulling the kite's string; when he flies too high (meaning that he deviates too far from the original text when translating), I will tell him, 'No, you can't do that', and pull him back a bit. But poets on the whole are still hard to change." (Zheng, 2011). It can be seen that although *Li Ch'ingchao: Complete Poems* is a joint translation by Rexroth and Chung Ling, Chung Ling basically plays a supporting role, and the translation in general still reflects Rexroth's concept of translation. Therefore, this paper defines the former translation as an in-coming translation, Rexroth as an in-coming translator. The latter translation is an out-going text, because Manfield Zhu is an out-going translator.

"Translator's Multiple Identities Model" was put forward by Zhao and Sun (2024). It was found that translators' primary identity, secondary identity and tertiary identity affects the loyalty, accuracy and readability of the translation by respective ways, resulting in the differences in translators' behavior. Zhao and Sun (2024) defined translators' social identity as the primary identity, in-coming or out-going translator as the secondary translator, creator identity as the tertiary identity.

Based on that, this paper analyzes the images shaped by the in-coming and out-going translators in the translated texts from three aspects: primary identity, secondary identity and tertiary identity. This paper will compare and analyze the primary, secondary and tertiary identities of Rexroth and Manfield Zhu.

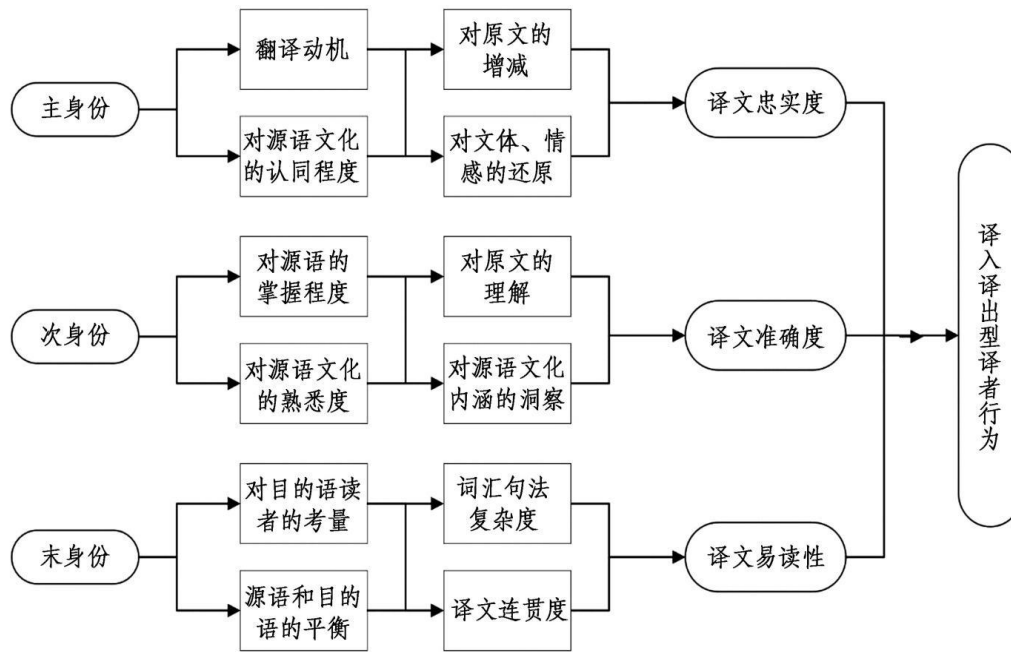


Figure 1. Translator's Multiple Identities Model

Cited from: Zhao Qiurong, Sun Peizhen, 2024

3.1 Primary Identity: Poet Versus University Professor

The primary identity, the most important one, is the social role that the translator has played for a long time (Zhao & Sun, 2024). It has a great influence on the translator's motivation and the translator's faithfulness to the source language culture, which in turn affects the translator's choice of translation strategies and his or her loyalty to the original text (Zhao & Sun, 2024). Individuals' cognition, thinking, behavior are always influenced by the collective culture as well as other individuals in the culture (Markus et al., 1991). Translators live in a certain social environment, and their translation behavior is naturally influenced by the social role of translators to a certain extent. Kenneth Rexroth's primary social identity is a poet. As a great fan of T.S. Eliot, he imitated the writing style of T.S. Eliot in the early poetry. However, in the practice of poetic creation, Rexroth gradually realized the drawbacks of this style. So he reflected on the social problems of his own country and turned to foreign cultures. Rexroth was attracted by the ideas of traditional Chinese culture, such as the idea of harmony between man and nature, and lyricism in poetry. He translated Chinese poems and drew some creative techniques from them. After Charles Pierre Baudelaire, the greatest influence on Western poetry has probably come from outside, Chinese and Japanese poetry (Rexroth, 1969). Zheng (2010) said that Rexroth gained support from foreign cultures in order to prove the correctness and universality of the ideas and opinions he shared. Therefore, due to his primary identity of poet, Rexroth just wants to search for ideological support and a solution to local social problems from Chinese culture through the translation of Li Qingzhao's poems, instead of a high degree of restoration of the original content, causing the choice of domestication strategy and less fidelity to the original text. Manfield Zhu's main

social identity is a professor at the Capital University of Economics and Business. As a university professor, Manfield Zhu has studied deeply in the field of both Chinese and English cultures. He has strong cultural confidence that Chinese culture will go to the world. As China grows stronger, traditional Chinese culture and Chinese characters will surely go to the world - influencing the future of mankind (Zhu, 2003). Zhu (2018) wrote: "The most important thing is to try my best to convey the important information and mood of the original text." Therefore, Manfield Zhu's intention is to promote Chinese culture to the world, resulting his choice of foreignization strategy and high fidelity to the original text.

3.1.1 Primary Identity Affects the Fidelity of Images

The different motivations and translation strategies caused by translators' primary identities affects translators' fidelity to the original texts, causing the various degree of fidelity to the original images. As an exotic poet, Kenneth Rexroth selected the content of the translation by the idea of "for my own use". *Li Ch'ingchao: Complete Poems* is the translation of the *Li Qingzhao Collection* published by Shanghai Classics Publishing House in 1962, which contains 79 of Li Qingzhao's ci poems, in addition to 17 poems, 3 texts, and a number of pieces. Rexroth deleted some contents and only chose 50 ci poems and 17 poems. What's more, Rexroth followed the principle of "creative translation", leading to deviation from the original images. Manfield Zhu's primary identity determined his high agreement on Chinese culture. He translated all the poems of *The Collected Poems of Li Qingzhao* published by People's Literature Publishing House in 1979. In addition, Manfield Zhu's style is translating poems like poems. So he reproduced the original images with a high degree of fidelity.

Example 1: 《行香子·草际鸣蜩》下阕:

星桥鹊驾，经年才见，想离情别恨难穷。牵牛织女，莫是离中。甚霎儿晴，霎儿雨，霎儿风。

Rexroth and Chung Ling's translation:

Once a year the Cowboy and Weaving Girl meet.

Imagine the year-long bitterness of their parting.

Now suddenly in the midst of their love-making

The wind blows first clear and then rain.

Manfield Zhu's translation:

Magpies would set up a starry bridge in a year,

How long for both of them to meet together?

The Cowboy and the Weaving Girl were bitterly separated from each other.

Sometimes it's a very fine day,

And then it may be rainy or windy.

Li Qingzhao is a representative of Graceful and Restrained School. Through the depiction of the love tragedy of the Cowherd and the Weaving Maiden in this lyric, Li Qingzhao expressed her longing for her husband, Zhao Mingcheng. Rexroth deleted the traditional Chinese imagery of “星桥” “鹊” and added the erotic word “love-making”. The description of weather was to imply the obstacles the

Cowherd and the Weaving Maiden met, but Rexroth used it to modify their sex life. The original images of the Cowherd and the Weaving Maiden do not express their emotion in such an open and direct way, which is the usual way in western countries. This image in the translation goes against the original one. The images Rexroth reproduced violates the original ones in terms of the ways two roles express their emotion. Manfield Zhu retained the imagery of "Magpie" and "star bridge", and tried his best to restore the original euphemistic images. Because of the different main identities of the poet Rexroth and university professor Manfield Zhu, the former used domestication strategy, while the latter used foreignization strategy, which caused the less fidelity to the original images of the former and the higher fidelity to the original images of the latter.

Example 2: 《渔家傲》上阙

雪里已知春信至，寒梅点缀琼枝腻。香脸半开娇旖旎，当庭际，玉人浴出新妆洗。

Rexroth and Chung Ling's translation:

Already, out of the snow,
You bring news that Spring is here,
Cold plum blossoms adorning
The glossy jasper branches,
Perfumed faces half showing,
Gracefully fluttering in the middle of the courtyard.
I come, my jade body fresh from the bath,
Newly powdered and rouged.

Manfield Zhu's translation:

The snow knows the vernal arrival,
The cold plum blossom decorates twigs to be beautiful.
All the blossom in half bloom look gentle in charm,
Like a makeup madam from her bathroom.

This poem depicts the beautiful, pure and noble image of blossoms. Rexroth combined the last few clauses into one, and used the first person narration, replacing "plum blossom" with "I", which strengthens context awareness and expresses the emotion more directly, but also increases the eroticism of blossom. The image of blossoms become more coquettish in Rexroth's translation. Manfield Zhu followed the structure of the original text and the third person perspective, using objective words to restore the gentle and pure image of the plum blossoms. The different primary identities of the poet Kenneth Rexroth and the university professor Mandield Zhu affect the fidelity of their translations, which in turn influences the image in their translation. Rexroth's "creative translation" and domestication translation strategy make the description more vivid, but also increase the erotic meaning of the images, which deviates from the original image and Li Qingzhao's "euphemism" style. Manfield Zhu adopted the foreignization translation strategy to preserve the original style, and accurately restored the original image and Li Qingzhao's writing style.

3.2 Secondary Identity: Native English Speaker versus Native Chinese Speaker

The secondary identity is native speakers of different languages (Zhao & Sun, 2024). Different native speakers live in different cultural environments, which inevitably lead to differences in their understanding of the source language and culture, and the accuracy of the translation (Zhao & Sun, 2024). The American poet Rexroth is a native English speaker. Although Rexroth loved Chinese culture very much and had studied it for some time, Chinese culture is so profound that Rexroth was not able to fully digest it and there were some misunderstanding in his translation. On the contrary, the native Chinese speaker Manfield Zhu, a scholar in Capital University of Economics and Business, was familiar with Chinese culture. In addition, he had studied at the University of Illinois and served as the vice president of Chinese Overseas Students, so he was also proficient in English. Mandield Zhu had a greater advantage in understanding the original text.

3.2.1 Secondary Identity Affects the Restoration of Images

The secondary identity of different native speakers leads to differences in understanding the source texts and accuracy of translation. The accuracy of translation largely determines the restoration of the images of the original work. The two translators of different nationalities, Rexroth and Manfield Zhu, grew up in different cultural environments. Rexroth is at a disadvantage in understanding Chinese culture. Manfield zhu is good at understanding the source text. So images in Rexroth's translation were restored at a less degree, images in Zhu's translation were restored at a higher degree.

Example 3:

《点绛唇》

蹴罢秋千，起来慵整纤纤手。

露浓花瘦，薄汗轻衣透。

见客入来，袜划金钗溜。

和羞走。

倚门回首，却把青梅嗅。

Rexroth and Chung Ling's translation:

To the tune: "I Paint My Lips Red"

After kicking on the swing,

Lasciviously, I get up and rouge my palms.

Thick dew on a frail flower,

Perspiration soaks my thin dress.

A new guest enters.

My stockings come down And my hairpins fall out.

Embarrassed, I run away,

And I lean flirtatiously against the door,

Tasting a green plum.

Manfield Zhu's translation:

Beautiful Lips by Crimson

Let feet touch ground stop the swing,

Leave it off to have tender hands releasing.

The rolling dew thick, the blooming flowers few,

My thin sweat immersed my inner shirt through.

Seeing guests come in,

I put off shoes but socks put on, my hairpin slipping down.

In shy manners, I walk along,

Looking back, I lean upon the gate,

To sniff the plum blossom fragrant.

《点绛唇》is an early ci poem of Li Qingzhao, which shaped the image of a naive, pure, emotionally rich, yet reserved young girl. Rexroth rewrote it with the erotic words “Lasciviously” and “flirtatiously”, added the word “rouge” to describe the woman’s heavy make-up and “a new” to imply that prostitutes were constantly receiving customers. Rexroth twisted the original image into an ancient Chinese brothel girl with a flirty demeanor, provocative makeup, and a smile on her face.

Manfield Zhu, on the basis of searching for various documents and understanding the original text accurately, utilized a series of verbs such as “Let feet touch ground”, “touch”, “Leave it off”, “put off”, “put on” to depict the girl’s active and lively image. After the guest suddenly came in, the woman rushed to put on her shoes, and in her panic the hairpin fell off. Because of her shyness and curiosity, the girl had to hide behind the door and peep. At the same time, “inner shirt” is also a good reproduction of the ancient Chinese dress culture. Manfield Zhu has accurately reproduced the innocent, pure, emotional yet reserved image of the original girl.

The English native speaker Rexroth and Chinese native speaker Manfield Zhu have different understanding of the source text, which causes their different translations and images with divergent accuracy. Rexroth misunderstood the source text. Rexroth thought that the content of this ci is too frivolous and vulgar, not like Li Qingzhao’s work, so he categorized it as a “doubtful ci poem”. He explained, “Because the content of this poem is about a prostitute who keeps receiving customers, it is unlikely the work of Li Qingzhao.” (Rexroth, K., & Chung, L., 1982). Rexroth’s misunderstanding of the source language culture generated the inaccurate translation, which led to a distortion of the image in the translation. On the other hand, Manfield Zhu, who was proficient in Chinese culture, kept a high accuracy in translation and accurately restored the image shaped by the original work.

3.3 Tertiary Identity: Creator Identity

The tertiary identity is the creator identity (Zhao & Sun). The identity of the creator refers his role in connecting the author and the reader. So he must take into account the reading experience of the reader in the creative process (Zhao & Sun). This identity affects the image portrayed by the translation by influencing the readability of the translation (Zhao & Sun). The translator’s task is to accurately

understand the text of the source language and at the same time accurately convey the meaning of the source language to the reader. One of the major difficulties is finding a balance between the target language and the source language.

3.3.1 Tertiary Identity Affects Vividness of Images

The tertiary identity of creator affects the readability of the translation, and further impacts on the vividness of images. The readability partly depends on translator's creativity. As a representative of China's excellent traditional culture, Li Qingzhao's poetry are full of rich cultural connotations, and how to show the cultural characteristics through text design is a vivid symbol of the translator's creativity. Both Kenneth Rexroth and Manfield Zhu's translations have rich paratexts. The paratexts can provide relevant context and cultural background around the main text, regulate the interaction between the text and the reader, and open a "window" for the reader to understand the text (Gu, 2024). This paper will discuss the creativity of the two translations from the perspective of paratexts.

The paratexts of Rexroth's translation contains cover, biography, NOTES. The cover is in black and white, with a portrait of Li Qingzhao on the left, "Li Ch'ing-Chao Complete Poems" in the center, and Li Qingzhao's famous lines "帘卷西风人比黄花瘦" on the right. Key messages are highlighted with these simple elements. But the black and white tones may be too dull for some readers. Biography of Li Ch'ing-Chao gives a diversified information about Li Qingzhao, filling out the blank of background. The final NOTES section puts the notes of the whole book together to explain the connotation of poems, which can lead the readers to think about it. But turning the book back and forth may cause inconvenience to readers.

Manfield Zhu's translation has a rich set of paratexts, including cover, preface, annotation, appendix and translator's postscript. An ingenious design of cover often attracts readers. For Western readers, Chinese culture is distinctive and unfamiliar. Pictures are figurative expressions of culture. The background of the cover is a traditional Chinese landscape painting. Chinese landscape painting is deeply influenced by Confucianism's "ruling the country and pacifying the world" and Taoism's "The Adjustment of Controversies", which integrates the individual and the collective including the country, the nation and the society. Therefore, Chinese landscape paintings often use grandiose scenes to express the harmony between nature and humanity, and convey the sentiment of "minding the world". Specifically, the huts in the mountains, on the other hand, are a symbol of people living in peace. There are clouds behind the characters of "Li Qingzhao". Clouds in landscape paintings are used to symbolize mystery and transcendence, and can also be a metaphor for a person's noble character. The cover design here not only hints at Li Qingzhao's own noble virtue of minding the country and seeking stability in her heart, but also attracts foreign readers with elements with Chinese characteristics. The preface consists of translator's preamble and Yanchao Lee's introduction. The tedious process of translation, diligence, sincerity, and translation methods of Manfield Zhu are introduced. Li Qingzhao's works contains a lot of allusions, which need to be understood with the help of rich cultural background knowledge. Considering that, Manfield Zhu uses appropriate annotations to improve the readability of

translations. The original texts and translations are symmetrically distributed, with detailed annotations below. The appendix introduces Li Qingzhao's life silhouette. It helps readers to understand the contemporary background of the translated text, filling in the lack of background knowledge of the source text, and increasing the cultural information of the translated text. The words not only introduce Li Qingzhao's experience, but also allow readers to better comprehend Li Qingzhao's mind states in different periods, which is very helpful for understanding her poems. In translator's postscript, Zhu expresses his resourceful thoughts on translation.

To sum up, the paratexts of Rexroth's translation are more concise and monochromatic, while the paratexts of Manfield Zhu's translation are richer and more variable, with a more rational layout, such as the Chinese-English parallels, and the distribution of the annotations' positions, making the translation more readable. As a creator, Zhu is more creative than Rexroth in paratexts of the translation. The higher creativity of Manfield Zhu makes the translation more readable, and the images more vivid.

4. Conclusion

The model of "Translator's Multiple Identities Model" proposed by Zhao Qiurong and Sun Peizhen analyzes how the translator's multiple identities influence the translator's behavior. On this basis, this paper further analyzes how the translator's behavior affects the images shaped by the translation. The research finds that the primary identity affects the fidelity of the images through influencing the translator's motivation and the translator's faithfulness to the source language culture, the secondary identity affects the restoration of the images through influencing translator's understanding of the source language and culture, and the tertiary identity affects the vividness of images through influencing translator's creativity of the translation. The study shows that the translation by Kenneth Rexroth and Chung Ling mainly displays the translation ideas of the former. The in-coming translator, Rexroth, has made a "creative English translation" of the original work, which is more contextualized and portrays the images of the original work with more cultural characteristics of the target language, and some of them even go against the original work. Manfield Zhu, the out-going translator, is faithful to the original text and uses various methods to increase the vividness of the original image on the basis of accurate understanding.

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