Analysis Of The Translation Strategy Of The Today's English Version Of The Bible – The Song Of Songs from the Perspective Of Dynamic Equivalence

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Abstract:
As an influential classic religious book with thousands of language versions, the Bible is of great significance to the process of translating the Bible into Chinese, strongly promoting the cultural exchanges between Chinese and Western cultures with a profound influence on Chinese culture. In this paper, the Modern English Translation and the Today's English Version of The Song of Songs is taken as the object of study to analyze the translation strategies and translation methods used in the Today's English Version and the Modern English Translation of the Bible according to the theory of "Dynamic Equivalence" of Eugene A. Naida. The study analyses the translation strategies and methods used in three terms of words, sentences and discourse, the applicability of "the most relevant natural equivalence" supported by the theory of "dynamic equivalence" is discussed in the Chinese translation of the Bible.
Keywords: *dynamic equivalence; Today's English Version; The Song of Songs*

I. Introduction:

The Song of Songs is unique as a part of the Bible. Unlike the other sections, the Song of Songs tells of the happies of love as well as the sorrows of missing between a man and a woman. The fact that it became part of the religious classic of the Hebrew Bible can be attributed to the "allegorical theory" made by Rabbi Akiba Ben Joseph (45CE-135 CE) in Jamnia, who successfully articulated the high religious value of The Song of Songs - "asserting that the relationship between the Shulamite and her beloved symbolizes God's love for Israel and Israel's love for God in return" (E Ann Matter, 1990). The Song of Songs eulogizes the love between man and woman, and its aesthetic values and emotional expressions have influence on the ideological content and artistic style of modern Chinese poetry.

Theoretical base

In 1959, Eugene A Nida was the first one to put forward the concept of "dynamic reciprocity". He claimed that translation should be reader-oriented, the render should respect the characteristics of the targeted language and try his best to explore the potential of the targeted words in the process of translating without creating new words and sentences when the translation encounters difficulties. He also pointed out that translation and communication, whether a translation is effective or not, mainly lies in the reader's ability to completely understand and appreciate the targeted text, with special emphasis on the equivalence between the original and the targeted text, attaching importance to the role played by the targeted text for the reader or listener of the targeted text (Eugene A Nida, 2001). He further defined this concept in his *The Theory and Practice of Translation* as "dynamic equivalence" which refers to identical response to the readers between the original and the targeted (Eugene A Nida, 1969). The core of Naida's theory is the idea that the receiver's response to the targeted text is equal to or equivalent to the original readers. According to Nida and Tabor (1969), response refers to the sum total of the receiver's reactions to the message in terms of understanding (or lack thereof), emotions, attitudes, decisions and actions (Eugene A Nida, 1969). The theory of functional equivalence claims that the source language is reproduced in the translated language in the closest and most natural equivalent, firstly in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style (Eugene A Nida, 1986). Translation, a cross-cultural communication activity, first is to make the reader understand the targeted text at a glance. However, there is inevitably a linguistic gap in language conversion amid different cultures. The word by word translation is not in line with the actual communication environment. The render often needs to make a trend between "faithfulness to the original form" and "expressing the meaning". In this regard, Naida proposed three advice:

The first one is to try to create a translation that not only conforms to the semantics of the original text but also reflects the cultural characteristics of the original text; The second one is that if meaning and culture cannot be taken into account at the same time, the render has to abandon form equivalence and reproduce the semantics and culture of the original text by changing the form of the original text in the target text; The third one is that if the change of form is still insufficient to express the semantics and culture of the original text, the translation skill of parody can be adopted to solve the cultural differences, so that the source language and the target language can achieve the three translation principles of meaning equivalence, and "semantic equivalence", "stylistic equivalence" and "readers response equivalence" are the three major evaluation criteria in translation. Tan Zaixi also analyzed and introduced Nida's translation theory in detail, including his translation principles, translation methods, language understanding, and semantic analysis, which also laid the foundation for the following studies (Tan Zaixi, 1982).

The Bible and *The Song of Songs*

The Bible is the shared classics between the Judaism and Christianity, derived from the Hebrew word kethubhim, meaning "writing", and later derived the meaning of "scripture"; graphai in Greek, scripture in Latin, and as "经" in Chinese. The *Christian Bible* consists of *The Hebrew Bible* and *The New Covenant*.

The Hebrew Bible consists of thirty-nine volumes written in ancient Hebrew (including Aramaic), which was compiled by Jewish clergy based on the tenets of Judaism, encompassing the Judaism and neighbor nations history from the 12th century BCE to the 2nd century BCE. It consists of 66 volumes, including 39 volumes of *The Hebrew Bible* and 27 volumes of the *The New Covenant*.

The Song of Songs, one volume of *the Bible*, is a chapter of poems talking about love, which recorded the mutual admiration between a man and a Shulamite woman in the form of a poem for eulogizing their sincere love. Its original name is "Song among Songs", which is also known as "The Best Song of Songs". Some translated versions translated it as "Song of Solomon", as many original Hebrew documents state that it was written by Solomon. *The Song of Songs*, as some scholars considered as the Song of Solomon, differs from the other chapters of *the Bible* in that it is a psalm of romantic love and its physical performances in marriage. Much to surprise is the fact that God is barely written in the whole volume. As a part of the volume of the Bible, it does not seem to fit the expectations of a "God-admiration" Bible, which is precisely what makes *the Song of Songs* so mysterious. *The Song of Songs* is undoubtedly one of the most mysterious and special chapters of *the Bible*, and although God is not mentioned, there seems to be a hidden power that inspires and motivates readers to seek and find the God to establish a deeper tie with God with a clearer realization of love for God. In fact, the love between the man and the Shulamite woman symbolizes the love of God and man, but also the intimate relationship between Christ and the Church is the deeper and more significant explanation of *the Song of Songs*, and it is this that makes this book one of the most valuable. This is also the important theme of the Bible: the intimate relationship between Christ and the saved through the union of marriage. The relationship as being between Christ and the church, symbolizing the relationship between Christ and the individual believer, for the church is not an alias for a house of worship, but the church is a general designation for the union of individual followers.

Analyzing the Today's English Version of *the Song of Songs* from the Perspective of "Dynamic Equivalence"

In this paper, two versions of the Bible are taken as the object of ananlyzing, one is the Today's English Version (Today's Chinese Version), or TCV for short, which is a translation of the Bible done in modern Chinese by the United Bible Societies (UBS) with the invitation of Chinese scholars and pastors, Professor Hsu Sai-mu, Dr Locke Wei-jen, Dr Chow Luen-hua, Dr Wong Ching-ching, and Ms Jiao Ming. The Today's English Version of the Bible was published in 1979, which was accepted by many Chinese Catholics and Christians (Tse Tien Chun, 2009). The other is the Today's English Version or Good News Bible, or TEV for short, which is an English translation version with advice from Naida in the process of translating. As all know, Naida is a well-known translation theorist and then was the Director of the Translation Department of the United Bible Societies, and follows the principle of "dynamic equivalence" and simple language. TEV translation follows the principle of "dynamic equivalence", featuring simple, vivid, easy words to understand, well accepting by the public.

lexical dynamic equivalence

The Song of Songs is a wedding song written in the form of a drama. Its rich vocabulary shows the characters from the side, so in the process of translation, the render should find the equivalent words from the vocabulary of the target language culture as maximum as possible, reflecting the semantics of the original language and the culture of the original culture. As in example (1):
TEV: Your lips cover on me with kisses; your love is better than wine.

TCV: 愿你用嘴唇亲吻我；你的爱情比美酒更香甜

As we all know, there is a great difference between Chinese and Western winemaking cultures, with Westerners favouring grapes as the raw material for wine brewing and Chinese preferring grains as the raw material. Combined with the fact that there are many descriptions of vineyards in *the Song of Songs*, "wine" implies the meaning of grapes excellent wines. Therefore, in Example (1), the render translates "wine" as "美酒", which effectively avoids the cultural comparison conflict when the readers reads the words, and focuses the attention on the protagonist's lingering and sentimental love.

Making good use of the existing words in the target language will be a reciprocal exchange of the source language, which makes the text more understandable and effectively achieves the dynamic equivalence of vocabulary. If there is no equivalent word in the target language, the render needs to be flexible and find the closest natural equivalent expression for translation, as in example (2):

TEV: Let the King have sixty queens and eighty concubines, young women without number

TCV: 君王有六十王后八十妃嫔；有无数宫女。

In example (2), the translator translates "king" as "君王", "queens" as "王后", and "concubines" as "妃嫔", which not only accurately convey the meaning of the original text, but also skillfully incorporate the essence of local traditional culture so that readers can quickly grasp the connotation without the need to go overboard. These transated words not only accurately convey the meaning of the original text, but also skillfully incorporate the essence of local traditional culture, so that readers can quickly grasp the connotations without the need for much explanation or background knowledge. Such a translation strategy not only preserves the translators's historical and cultural flavor of the original text, but also enhances the readability and affinity of the translated text. In dealing with the concept of "young women", the translator's wisdom is even more evident. Instead of simply adopting a word-for-word translation as "年轻女性", the translator has analyzed the context and intention of the original text in depth, and searched for the most appropriate word in the target language that best reflects the context of the original text - "宫女". This translation not only realizes the dynamic equivalence of the vocabulary at the semantic level, so that readers of the target language can naturally understand its meaning, but also skillfully conveys the cultural characteristics of the countless beauties in the king's harem in the original text, so that the readers, while enjoying the exotic flavors, can also feel the cultural resonance across the time and space. The translation fully demonstrates the translator's skill and profound cultural background on the basis of in-depth understanding of the original text. Through careful selection of vocabulary and skillful application of translation strategies, the translation is not only faithful to the original text, but also full of creativity and vitality, which builds a solid bridge for cross-cultural communication.

As in example (3):

TEV: You, my love, excite men as a mare excites the stallions of Pharaoh's chariots

TCV: 我的爱人哪，你吸引男孩子，好比法老战马中的牝马

Example (3) "Mare" refer to the adult female horse in Egyptian culture, which is translated as "牝马". In Chinese culture the "牝马" refers to the mare which is loyal and untamed, but has the principle of following the male horse, which fits the protagonist character, Shurami, who is pure in heart and brave in her pursuit of love. It fits the image of the main character, Shulamite, who is pure in heart, brave in her pursuit of love with the meek attitude to the man. In the pursuit of the idea that readers of the targeted text should have the same reaction and experience as the readers of the original text, the render reproduces the equivalent meaning of the original words rather than the form of the original text without following word-for-word translation, showing the flavor of the original text without being bound by its form.

Example (4):

TEV: Restore my strength with raisins and refresh me with apples! I am weak from passion.

TCV: 请用葡萄干来补养我，用苹果来恢复我的精神，因我为了相思病倒了。

Example (4) The heroine is talking about how she is losing weight as her love for her man has reached its peak. There is a significant difference between the western countries and China. The render translates these words by literal translation because in the eyes of Chinese readers, "sultanas" and "apples" are in line with the English culture, which are food and can provide nutrients for the human body. The method of literal translation not only preserves the original form, but also conveys the original meaning. Most importantly, the word "passion" is translated as "相思", which reflects the core idea of dynamic translation theory, which focuses on the reader, and shows the emotional state of the heroine who is sick with lovesickness, reproducing the original semantics in a vivid way. It realizes the dynamic equivalence of vocabulary, which is extremely more infectious.

Sentence dynamic equivalence

When the original language form hinders the reproduction of the meaning of the original text in the translation, the render is supposed to discard the formal equivalence to express the meaning in a full way. Therefore the domestication translation strategy is used with free translation method in accordance with the dynamic equivalence. As in example (5):

TEV: The cedars will be he beams of our house, and the cypress the ceiling.
TCV: 把香柏树当屋子的栋梁，把松树当天花板。

There is a significant difference between the Chinese and English languages in the way of expression. English sentence makes good use of substance as its subject, while Chinese sentence prefers people as its subject. If the original English text being translated with literal translation will lead to the translation appearing rigidness, losing its readability to the readers. As the render's translation of example (5), the formal equivalence of the original text is abandoned to reproduce the semantic meaning of the original text by changing the form of the original text, so as to realize the dynamic equivalence of the meaning of the sentence.

In the translating process of poetry. the render is supposed to attach great importance to the preservation of its form, which is indeed presented in the TCV translation version with concise and refined vocabulary, effectively enhancing the literary effect. The words meet the aesthetic flavors of Chinese readers, as in example (6):

TEV: I hear my lover's voice. He comes running over the mountains, racing across the hills to me.
TCV: 我听见了爱人的声音；他爬山越岭向我奔来

Example (6) expresses the pure love between the two protagonists who run to love in both directions. the words of "running over the mountains, racing across the hills" is translated as the four-letter structure "爬山越岭" ,which vividly reserves the semantic meaning of the original text that the man runs to love without any obstacles in the mountains and hills. The use of four-letter structure with Chinese characteristics in the translation is in line with the aesthetic flavors of the Chinese readers, and it is highly readable, and the render gives up the form of the original text to realize the dynamic reciprocity of meaning and the original text.

The vividness of the language of the Song of Songs, which blends innocent love with the simplicity of nature, and the freshness and naturalness of life, is due to its use of a large number of metaphors to express emotions. The similes and metaphors in the Song of Songs have a strong Hebrew distinctive national characteristics. The Hebrews were originally a nomadic people, and later moved to Canaan, which is famous for its "milk and honey", producing grapes, pomegranates, dates, olives, figs and other fruits. Thus, the metaphor shows a strong national cultural flavor, values and aesthetic needs, and the render should have the flexibility to choose and choose in the process of translation, trying to retain the style of the original, but also taking into account that the Chinese readers should have the same reaction as the readers of the original, and maximally achieve the "most appropriate natural equivalence". As in example (7):

But I love only one, and she is as lovely as a dove.
TCV: 但我只爱一人；她像鸽子一般可爱

The dove, with its beautiful image and gentle nature, is favorited by both Easterners and Westerners. The dove is regarded as a symbol of peace, love and equality in western culture. Example (7) is an expression of impartial love from the noble emperor to the rustic Shulamite, which glorifies the equal relationship between the two parties in love. It shows the pure and beautiful image of the heroine as a dove and highly praises the pure and chaste love. The translation adopts the technique of sub-translation in accordance with the Chinese poetic conventions.

equivalence of chapters and articles

Both Christians and non-Christians are the target readers of the translated text, and the famous "unique" – The Song of Songs rarely records words with religious overtones, so the translated text follows this feature without using religious words, as in example (8):

TEV: It burns into flame and burns like a raging fire.
TCV: 它爆出火焰，像烈火一样燃烧。

In the example (8), it is necessary to explore the translation strategies of "flame" and "fire" in specific contexts and their effects on the overall textual communication effect. The word "flame" usually refers to the bright, flickering part of a flame, which has a distinctive and dynamic visual effect. In Chinese, translating it as "flame" not only preserves the intuitive image of the original word, but also accurately conveys its bright and active character. This choice of translation helps to reconstruct the visual scene of the original word in the target language, so that readers can intuitively feel the flames' leaping and luster. In contrast, the word "fire" has a broader meaning, covering the process of combustion, the shape of the flame, the heat and the light. In Chinese, when it is translated as "烈火", it emphasizes the strong and fierce characteristics of fire, which not only conveys the physical properties of fire, but also provides readers with a strong visual impact through the rendering power of language. Such a translation strategy has a significant effect in creating a tense and passionate atmosphere, which can stimulate readers' emotional resonance and deep thinking. In the translation of religious texts, such as the Bible, the treatment of "flame" and "fire" is especially crucial. Especially in poetic works such as the Song of Songs, the choice of vocabulary should not only be faithful to the original text, but also be able to convey the rhythmic beauty and profound meaning of the poem. In translating "The Flame of Jehovah", the translator skillfully avoids directly mentioning "Jehovah", a specific religious term, as in the

textual characteristics of the Song of Songs, and creates a translation that is not only in line with the characteristics of the original text, but also close to the cognition of the Chinese readers through the translation strategy. Instead, the translation strategy creates a translation that meets the characteristics of the original text and is close to the Chinese readers' perception. Such a treatment not only maintains the coherence and faithfulness of the text.

In the process of translation, the render may want to make the translation more logical, enhance readability and make the whole content more compact by adjusting the word order, as in example (9):

TEV: Catch the foxes, the little foxes, before they ruin our vineyard in bloom.

TCV: 要抓住狐狸，那捣毁葡萄园的小狐狸，因为葡萄树正开着花呢。

In example (9), the text skillfully contains a rich and profound metaphorical expression. In dealing with this passage, the translator demonstrates her excellent translation ability, not sticking to the literal meaning of the original text, but creatively translating the image of "the little fox who destroys the vineyard", which is skillfully transformed into the factors destroying the love relationship between the two. It is especially worth mentioning that the translator skillfully added the conjunction "因为", which not only reveals the cause and effect relationship implied in the original text, i.e., why these "foxes" should be captured because of their destructive power to the vineyard, but also metaphorically represents a potential threat to the intimate relationship between the two. potential threat to their intimate relationship. The vineyard here is at a critical period of blossoming and fruitfulness, and this detail is keenly captured and preserved by the translator, which graphically maps out the beautiful stage of the two men's relationship as it heats up and matures. Through this delicate depiction, readers can deeply feel the subtle changes in the emotional development between Shulamite and the good man.

The TCV Bible is accepted by the majority of readers because of its concise and condensed language and short, easy-to-understand sentences. As in example (10):

TEV: .Women of Zion, come and see King Solomon. He is wearing the crown that his mother placed on his head on his wedding day, on the day of his gladness and joy.

TCV: 锡的女子们哪，来看所罗门王。他头上戴着冠冕，是他成婚之日，他快乐兴奋的那一天，他母亲替他带上的。

In example (10), it is not difficult to find that the translator demonstrates a deep understanding of Chinese language characteristics and readers' preferences. Faced with the long and complex sentence structure in the original text, the translator did not choose to translate it directly, but adopted a suitable strategy to cut the long sentence into several small and concise phrases. This treatment is not only in line with the Chinese readers' preference for concise and clear, well-organized reading habits, but also makes the translation more fluent and natural, easy to read and understand. In the choice of vocabulary, the translator also shows great skill. He discarded complicated and unfamiliar vocabulary and chose relevant language instead, such as translating "crown" as "冠冕", to ensure that the translation conveys the meaning of the original text and at the same time enables readers to grasp the core message of the text at a glance. This kind of concise but not simple wording reflects the translator's profound grasp of the essence of the Chinese language. What is particularly important is that the translator always maintains a precise grasp of the meaning of the original text in the process of cutting long sentences and choosing simple vocabulary. Through clever translation strategies, he realizes the organic dynamic equivalence between the translated text and the original text in terms of meaning. This equivalence is not only reflected in the surface level of vocabulary and sentences, but also goes deeper into the connotation and meaning of the text, so that the readers can feel the same emotional resonance and ideological enlightenment as that of the original text when they read the translated text.

II. Conclusion

The Bible, as a brilliant star of human civilization, its historical process of translation and research is like a continuous river that never stops, always surging with wisdom and exploration. The Song of songs, as a unique pearl in the Bible, with its unique form of song response, is like a long artistic scroll slowly unfolding, building a complete and harmonious artistic frame. In this chapter, the vivid metaphors are like stars, the sharp contrasts are like black and white, the repetitive techniques are like the echoes of a melody, and the white words are like the flow of a clear spring, which all together reflect the deep cultural heritage and unique artistic style of the oral creation of the Hebrew people. With the wide circulation of modern English translations such as TEV (Today's English Version) and TCV (The Contemporary Version), these versions have been well received by the readers with their proximity to modern language and ease of understanding. Among them, the Song of Songs, as a religious classic, has touched the hearts of countless people with its deep, delicate and philosophical strokes. Under the guidance of Eugene A. Naida's "dynamic equivalence" theory, this paper conducts an in-depth case study on the modern English translation of the Bible – The Song of Songs. Through detailed translation analysis, the TCV version retains the cultural characteristics of the source language while fully taking into account the culture and Chinese background of the readers of the translated language, and strives to achieve

"the most natural equivalence". The Chinese version, with its easy-to-read and wide audience, successfully crosses the language and culture gap, and makes profound connotation and beautiful meaning of the Psalms widely disseminated and appreciated by Chinese readers. Naida's theory of "dynamic equivalence" not only provides important guidance for the Chinese translation of the Bible, but also opens up a new path for the Chinese translation of foreign classics. This theory emphasizes that in the process of translation, emphasis should be placed on the equivalence between the translated text and the original text in terms of meaning rather than the mechanical correspondence in form. Therefore, when translating foreign classics into Chinese, the theory of "Dynamic Equivalence" can be used as a translation theory with high reference, which can provide practical translation strategies and methods for translators, so that the translated text can be faithful to the meaning and style of the original text, and at the same time conform to the reading habits and aesthetic demands of Chinese readers.

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