RESEARCH ARTICLE

STUDY ON XIAO QIAN'S TRANSLATION FEATURES FROM INTERLINGUAL TRANSLATION

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Abstract

The *Tales from Shakespeare*, co-written by the famous English essayist Charles Lamb and his sister Mary Lamb in the 19th century, is a milestone in rewriting Shakespeare's plays. It contains twenty Shakespeare plays that are widely known to readers, including six tragedies and fourteen comedies. The book has been widely praised by readers after its publication. The Chinese scholar Lin Shu translated *Tales from Shakespeare* into *Yin Bian Yan Yu*, a book that initiated the study of Shakespeare's plays by a wide range of scholars. Since then, some scholars have translated the *Tales from Shakespeare*, of which the most influential is Xiao Qian's *Collection of Shakespeare's Plays*, which has been reprinted many times since it was published in 1956. *Collection of Shakespeare's Plays* has been selected as the recommended reading series for Chinese teenagers, which has become the primary choice for teenagers to learn about Shakespeare's works. Taking *Tales from Shakespeare* and *Collection of Shakespeare's plays* as research objects, this paper compares Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare* with Xiao Qian's *Collection of Shakespeare's Plays*. It analyzes the features of Xiao Qian's translation from the perspective of Jacobson's interlingual translation. After comparative research, this paper finds that Xiao Qian used various translation methods such as transliteration, free translation, literal translation, and addition. Based on being faithful to the original text, the translated version re-divides some paragraphs of the article, adjusts the word order of some sentences, sinicizes some address terms, and colloquializes some expressions so that the translated text conforms to the Chinese usage habits and the reading expectations of young readers. Therefore, Xiao Qian's translation is faithful to the original text, with clear paragraph structure and sufficient colloquialized words, which is easy to understand and highly readable.

Keywords: *Tales from Shakespeare*; Xiao Qian; Interlingual Translation

1. Introduction

Tales from Shakespeare, which contains twenty famous plays of Shakespeare, was written by Charles Lamb and Mary Lamb for young readers to understand the content of Shakespeare's works. The two authors rewrite these plays from the perspective of teenagers and try to tell these stories in the language style of Shakespeare's era. They wish

that *Tales from Shakespeare* will help young readers to understand the essence of plays of Shakespeare and to learn some precious virtues, for example, honorable thoughts and actions, courtesy, benignity, generosity, and humanity (C. Lamb and M. Lamb 3). *Tales from Shakespeare* has been deeply loved by readers and has become the best choice for teenagers to understand Shakespeare's works since its publication. Watson believed that it is "unique and unmatched by any other works" (Watson 130) in the history of children's literature adaptation. *The Gentleman's Magazine* has praised each story of *Tales from Shakespeare* for its appropriate language and plot processing, not only to keep young readers entertained but also to introduce them to the immortal spirit and imagination of Shakespeare (Ji and Feng 72).

In addition, *Tales from Shakespeare* played an irreplaceable role in the entry of Shakespeare's works into China. *Yin Bian Yan Yu* (吟边燕语), published in 1904, was translated from *Tales from Shakespeare* by Lin Shu, which also laid the solid foundation for the subsequent flourishing of the study of Shakespeare's works in China. After Lin Shu translated *Tales from Shakespeare*, other translators also translated *Tales from Shakespeare*, and the version translated by Xiao Qian has a wide influence. Since its publication in 1956, the *Collection of Shakespeare's Plays* has been reprinted many times. It has been selected as the recommended reading series for Chinese teenagers, which has become the primary choice for teenagers to learn about Shakespeare's works.

The domestic research on *Tales from Shakespeare* mainly focuses on the following aspects. Ji Rangping and Fengwei (70) systematically analyze the historical background of *Tales from Shakespeare*. He believes that the great success of *Tales from Shakespeare* rewritten by Charles Lamb and Mary Lamb is because it highlights the fairy tales, fantasies, and romantic stories in Shakespeare's works and caters to the reading interests and needs of young readers. It also provides excellent reading materials for the British family reading activities that have sprung up since the 18th century. Zhao Kai (167) argues that the unprecedented commercial success of *Yin Bian Yan*

Yu in China is due to Lin Shu's localization of Shakespeare's plays, which met the readers' reading expectations at that time. Huang Yanjie (125) believes that Xiao Qian's *Collection of Shakespeare's Plays* was the product of history and times. The use of domestication in translation is influenced by the translator's subject consciousness. And Xiao Qina's translated version has been republished continuously because it meets the spiritual needs of the majority of readers.

The above scholars have mainly studied the reasons for the success of Tales from Shakespeare and its translated versions. Little research has been conducted on Xiao Qian's translation from the perspective of interlingual translation. This paper analyzes the features of Xiao Qian's translation from the perspective of Jacobson's interlingual translation and translation strategy.

2. Intralingual Translation and Interlingual Translation

Jacobson believes that translation can be divided into idiom translation, intralingual translation, and interlingual translation (Munday 5). Intralingual translation refers to the use of the same language to interpret or paraphrase the existing text. Idiom translation is to adapt the text into different forms such as music, film, and painting, while interlingual translation is the traditional use of another language to translate the original text into the target text. According to Jacobson's classification of translation, the *Tales from Shakespeare* adapted from Shakespeare's works by Charles Lamb and Mary Lamb belongs to intralingual translation, while the *Collection of Shakespeare's Plays* translated by Xiao Qian according to *Tales from Shakespeare* belongs to interlingual translation.

2.1 Intralingual Translation

The Romantic trend that emerged in the late 18th century aroused the Romantic poet's concern for the spiritual world of children. They highly praised children's virtue of innocence, happiness, rich imagination, and sensibility (Shu and Ding 223). They believed that these virtues could make humankind perfect, and fairy tales and fantasy stories can help children develop these virtues. *Tales*

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from Shakespeare was born in such a background. Adhering to the intention of writing stories for young readers, Charles Lamb and Mary Lamb considered the boundaries of language in the process of rewriting, deleting the parts that were unsuitable for teenagers, and finally presenting a book with a clear storyline and fluent language for young readers.

2.2 Interlingual Translation

The *Collection of Shakespeare's Plays,* translated by Xiao Qian, was published in 1956. Under the unique background of the times, the domestic literary creation circumstance was deeply influenced by the Soviet Union (Xie 55), which promoted the realistic creation style and literary translation. Translators and poetics prefer realistic works. Therefore, Shakespeare's works, as a realistic style, attracted a large number of translators during this period. Under the background of the times and Xiao Qian's translation selection principle (Li 36), Xiao Qian translated the *Tales from Shakespeare* rewritten by Charles Lamb and Mary Lamb into Chinese so that Chinese teenagers could appreciate the style of Shakespeare's works in an abbreviated version. He expected readers to choose the works they are interested in to read Shakespeare's original works, which is consistent with the goal of Charles Lamb and Mary Lamb.

3. Xiao Qian's Linguistic Features in the *Collection of Shakespeare's Plays*

Tales from Shakespeare and *Collection of Shakespeare's Plays* play an extremely important role in the translation history of Shakespeare's works in China, especially in guiding young readers to read Shakespeare's works. Xiao Qian used the domestication strategy and various translation methods in translating *Tales from Shakespeare*. The following part will analyze Xiao Qian's treatment of discourse structure and vocabulary use from the perspective of interlingual translation and translation strategy to analyze the characteristics of Xiao Qian's translation.

3.1 Discourse Structure

In the translation of *Tales from Shakespeare*, Xiao Qian made adjustments to the discourse structure of the original text, including adjustments to the paragraphs of the text and adjustments to the order of sentences.

3.1.1 Paragraph Adjustment

It is not difficult for readers to find that the paragraph division of Xiao Qian's version is slightly different from that of Lamb's version when they read *Tales from Shakespeare* and *Collection of Shakespeare's Plays*. Xiao Qian divided the long paragraphs containing a lot of dialogue in *Tales from Shakespeare* into several paragraphs. The new paragraphs often start with the important turning point of the dialogue or story. The new paragraph division highlights the dialogue content of the characters in the story or the turning point of the important plot, which is very in line with the reading habits of Chinese readers. In Lamb's version of *Romeo and Juliet*, the paragraph in which Romeo and Juliet express their feelings for each other is as long as three pages. Xiao Qian divided this long paragraph into eight paragraphs according to the dialogue and the protagonist's psychological activities, which is helpful for readers to locate the protagonist's dialogue and psychological activities to judge the protagonist's current psychological status. A clear division of the paragraph can help young readers focus on reading. Because the long part of the paragraph is very easy to cause the fatigue of young readers, thus sapping readers' interest in reading and making reading bland.

3.1.2 Sentence Adjustment

Due to the differences between Chinese and English language systems, the sentence structure in Chinese and English contexts are also different. Therefore, when translating some sentences, the translator will adjust the sentence structure to make it conform to the habits of the target language to enhance the fluency and readability of the translation.

(1) ST: I will resist such entertainment, till I see a more powerful enemy. (C. Lamb and M. Lamb 10)

TT: 我一定要抵抗，除非你能用力气压倒我，不然的话，我一定不受你这样的虐待。(Xiao 8)

The original text uses the preposition "till" to connect two clauses. While the translation expands the two clauses into four short sentences and puts the sentence containing the meaning of "such entertainment" at the end of the sentence, emphasizing Ferdinand's determination to fight Prospero. Xiao Qian translated "entertainment" into "虐待" according to the previous context. The use of this word is in line with the context of the original text, which shows the prince's indomitable spirit, while the added "不然的话" is consistent with Chinese usage and makes the translation coherent. In addition, in dealing with "I see a more powerful enemy," Xiao Qian used the method of free translation. According to the previous plot, the prince is talking to Prospero, so the "enemy" is Prospero, that is, "you" in the translation. It can be seen that Xiao Qian's translation is very flexible, taking into account not only the character characteristics but also the character identity transformation in the dialogue, which gives the readers a sense of immersion when reading and helps them maintain their interest in continuing reading.

(2) ST: The Britons would have been defeated, and Cymbeline himself killed, but for the extraordinary velour of Posthumus and Bellarius, and the two sons of Cymbeline. (C. Lamb and M. Lamb 122)

TT: 如果不是波塞摩斯·里奥那托斯、培拉律斯和新白林的两个儿子异常骁勇，不列颠人一定会吃败仗，新白林本人也会阵亡的。(Xiao 119)

The original text uses subjective sentences, putting the main sentence in front of the clause, and connecting the clause with "but for." Xiao Qian adjusted the sentence structure, placing the clause indicating the hypothesis in advance and the main sentence action behind it to form a familiar hypothetical sentence in Chinese. Besides, the translator added the adverb "一定" to emphasize the urgency of the situation and the importance of the hypothesis. Without the four warriors, the Britons would undoubtedly lose the war, and Cymbeline would lose his life.

In addition, "be defeated" and "killed" in the original text are passive voice. In translation, the passive voice of these two expressions is replaced with the active voice. The meaning also changes from "been defeated" and "killed" to "吃败仗" and "阵亡" with Chinese characteristics to achieve the effect of smooth reading. Due to different language systems, the passive voice is commonly used in English, while the active voice is widely used in Chinese. The seemingly small difference will lead to different reading feelings. Too much passive voice in the translation will make the readers feel uncomfortable because it is not in line with Chinese usage. Changing the passive voice to the active voice can solve this problem, making the translation conform to the target language culture and make the translation meaningful.

(3) ST: This seeming want of gratitude in the boy astonished the Roman general. (C. Lamb and M. Lamb 124)

TT: 罗马将军吃了一惊，觉得这个孩子怪忘恩负义的。(Xiao 121)

Xiao Qian divided a sentence into two clauses, and the subject in the original sentence has changed from "this seeming want of gratitude in the boy" to "Roman general". The predicate also changed from "astonish" to "吃了一惊" and "觉得". These changes reflect the characteristics of the Chinese emphasizing parataxis and verbs. In addition, the translator used free translation to translate the "want of gratitude" of the original text into "忘恩负义." Under the condition of completely conveying the meaning of the original text, the translator uses idioms with Chinese characteristics. It can be seen that Xiao Qian tends to use words and sentences in line with Chinese expression habits.

3.2 Vocabulary Usage

Some words have different meanings in English and Chinese due to the differences between Chinese and Western languages and cultures. Therefore, translators need to use flexible translation methods to translate such words so that the translation can express the original meaning and conform to the habits of the target language.

3.2.1 Sinicization of Address Terms

People pay different attention to kinship on account of the differences between Chinese and Western cultures and lifestyles. Western countries advocate individualism, and individual freedom takes precedence over collective interests. Relatives in western countries refer to members who are related by blood. Therefore, kinship is not particularly complex, and there are not too many address terms among family members. In contrast, China is a typical collectivist country. The "three cardinal guides and five constant virtues" proposed by Dong Zhongshu clarifies the relationship between monarch and minister and father and son. The proposal of "ruler guides subject, father guides son, and husband guides wife" also makes the continuation of the patriarchal clan. In this case, a family has a large number of people, and the relationships among them are close. Therefore, Chinese families attach great importance to the address of relatives. Although the relationship between clan members is not as close as in ancient society, the address system among relatives still exists and is used daily.

(1) ST: I was duke of Milan, and you were a princess, and my only heir. (C. Lamb and M. Lamb 6)

TT: 我是米兰的公爵，你是个郡主，也是我唯一的继承人。(Xiao 3)

According to records, the monarch of Milan was canonized as the Duke of Milan by the Roman emperor in 1395, and the Duchy of Milan was established in the same year. The Duchy of Milan became a Spanish territory in 1535 and was then ruled by many countries until it became the central part of the Republic of Chisalpini in 1797. Combined with Shakespeare's creative background, Milan was no longer an independent country at that time. The Duke of Milan was subordinate to the monarch of the ruling country, so the daughter of the Duke of Milan was no longer a "Princess" but a "Lady" with a slightly lower status than the princess. Therefore, Xiao Qian chose the "郡主," corresponding to the "Lady" class in Chinese history, to show Miranda's identity, fully express the original text's meaning, and added national characteristics to the translation. In addition, the translation eliminates the past-time meaning of the original text and shows Prospero's unwillingness to reality, conveying the meaning of "I was the Duke of Milan before, and I am still the Duke of Milan now."

(2) ST: Cymbeline ... not only gave her husband Posthumus his life, but consented to acknowledge him for his son-in-law. (C. Lamb and M. Lamb 125)

TT: 新白林不但饶了她丈夫波塞摩斯·里奥那托斯的命，并且承认波塞摩斯·里奥那托斯做他的驸马。(Xiao 122)

In English, the words expressing kinship are relatively fixed. The same word can contain several similar relationships in Chinese. For example, "cousin" means "堂兄、表兄、堂姐和表姐" in Chinese. In the example sentence, "son in law" is translated into "驸马", which uses the ancient Chinese term for the husband of a princess. Imogen is the daughter of the British king Cymbeline. Therefore, Imogen's husband is Cymbeline's son-in-law. Xiao Qian chose the "驸马" that conforms to the complete identity of Posthumus, which not only conveys the meaning of the original text but also makes the translation have national characteristics. The translation of "gave" into colloquial "饶" not only reflects the change in Cymbeline's attitude towards Posthumus but also the overlooking of civilians by the superior. Posthumus is no longer an exiled civilian but a lifesaver of Cymbeline and Britain.

(3) ST: O my young gentleman, I will soon move you.... Come, sir, follow me. (C. Lamb and M. Lamb 9)

TT: 啊，少爷，我马上就把你弄走。...来，少爷，跟我走吧。 (Xiao 6)

Xiao Qian used the free translation to translate "young gentleman" and "sir" with respect in the original text into "少爷" with hierarchical meaning in Chinese, and the translation completely conveyed the meaning of the original text. According to the previous content, Ariel is an elf who obeys Prospero's orders to do things. To a certain extent, Ariel is a servant who obeys Prospero's orders. Therefore, Ariel will address Prince Ferdinand and

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Miranda with respect, referring to them as "少爷" and "小姐." In addition, the translator translates "move" in the original text as "弄走" so that the translation adds a colloquialism feature based on respecting the original text, making the translation easy to read.

3.2.2 Colloquialization of Words

As the *Tales from Shakespeare* is a simplified version of Shakespeare's plays for teenagers, Charles Lamb and Mary Lamb strive to convey the essence of the original work with relatively simple sentences when rewriting. Xiao Qian also considered the corresponding problems when translating. The language of the works translated for young readers should be interesting, and the style should be consistent with the culture of the target language. Therefore, Xiao Qian used numerous folk adages to replace the corresponding expressions in English so that young readers would not have a strong sense of resistance when reading.

(1) ST: Whenever the thoughts of her father's banishment, and her own dependence on the false usurper, made Rosalind melancholy. (C. Lamb and M. Lamb 62)

TT: 每逢罗瑟琳想起她父亲的被逐，以及她自己寄在这个奸恶的篡位者的篱下而悲伤起来的时候。(Xiao 60)

The original meaning of "dependence on" is "rely on." Xiao Qian translated "dependence on" into "寄人篱下." He used the idiom "寄人篱下" to express Rosalind's hatred for Frederick's exile of her father but her helplessness of having to live with the usurper. This idiom enables readers to understand Rosalind's embarrassing situation easily and makes the translation colloquial. At the same time, it also paves the way for Frederick to let Rosalind leave the palace and go into exile. The free translation of "false usurper" as "奸恶的篡位者" clearly shows Frederick's hypocrisy and evil. To a certain extent, it guides teenagers to understand the characters and realize that people who rob others' property are treacherous and evil.

(2) ST: So completely was the love of these two cousins unmixed with anything of jealousy or

of envy. (C. Lamb and M. Lamb 79)

TT: 堂姐妹俩之间的感情是十分美好的，一点儿也没有掺杂眼红或是吃醋的成分。(Xiao 75)

Rosalind became the heir of the principality again, and Celia was no longer the heir, but Celia sincerely congratulated Rosalind, which shows that their sisterhood is very sincere. Xiao Qian used free translation to express the meaning of the two synonyms of "jealousy" and "envy" with "眼红" and "吃醋" in Chinese, which not only fits the sentence structure of the original text but also makes the translation has the characteristics of folklore.

(3) ST: But to try Ferdinand's constancy, he resolved to throw some difficulties in their way. (C. Lamb and M. Lamb 9)

TT: 可是为了试试腓迪南的爱情究竟靠得住靠不住，他决定故意为难他们一下。(Xiao 7)

"Constancy" means "the quality of staying the same even though other things change." Combined with the context, Prospero already knows that Ferdinand and Miranda are deeply attracted to each other, but he doesn't know whether Ferdinand is a suitable spouse. Therefore, Prospero wants to test whether Ferdinand's love is constant. Xiao Qian used the saying "靠得住靠不住" to express this meaning, which is very consistent with the Chinese context. To some extent, Xiao Qian's free translation has added the readability of the translation by using phrases that are in line with Chinese expression habits.

(4) ST: I perceive these poor distracted women are but the instruments of some greater one, who sets them on. (C. Lamb and M. Lamb 219)

TT: 我看这两个可怜的疯女人背后一定有个更高明的人指使着，她们不过是给那个人做了爪牙。(Xiao 212)

Xiao Qian uses free translation to translate the original text into "背后有高人指使," a very colloquial expression in Chinese which means someone is instructed to do something. Angelo said

this sentence to Duke to show that someone was using Isabella and Mariana to accuse him falsely. Angelo wanted to divert the Duke's attention and cover up his evil deeds. "爪牙" is also a common saying in Chinese, which is used to express the person who works for the bad guys. The "instrument" has the meaning of "the person who is used by people to achieve a particular aim." Xiao Qian grasped the meaning of "instrument" and used the "爪牙" with the same meaning and clear emotional color in Chinese to fully express the meaning of the original text. The colloquial words make the translation read more coherent.

4. Conclusion

Analyzing from the perspective of interlingual translation theory, Xiao Qian translates *Tales from Shakespeare* not only considering the meanings that the original text wants to convey but also considering the phenomenon of language gap caused by the difference between Chinese and Western cultures and balancing the differences between Chinese and Western cultures in the translation. Under the influence of the background of the times and the translator's translation purpose, Xiao Qian uses the translation strategy of domestication, which is not only beneficial for young readers to read foreign literature but also for readers to understand the connotation of the stories.

This thesis has found that Xiao Qian mainly used transliteration, free translation, literal translation, and addition in translation. In translating the names of characters, Xiao Qian used transliteration. For the translation of address words and some phrases, he used free translation and literal translation. The translator tended to use words with similar meanings in the Chinese context to replace the terms of address in Western culture and phrases with Chinese folklore to convey the meaning of the original text so that readers can quickly understand the relationship between the characters and the meaning of the original text. In addition, Xiao Qian also added some words expressing emotional transmission, which helps young readers to understand the emotional transformation of the characters in the story.

Based on being faithful to the original text, Xiao Qian is more inclined to use words and sentence structures in line with Chinese habits. The text structure of the translation is clear, the language is easy to understand, and a variety of folk and colloquial expressions are used to bring readers a good reading experience and help readers establish good reading habits.

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