

Poetic Alchemy: An Integrated Linguistic Model for Representing Romanticism in the Translation of Wordsworth's Poetry

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Abstract

The metaphor of 'poetic alchemy' frames a critical challenge in poetry translation: extracting the literary essence from simple utterances as an alchemist extracts the 'philosopher's stone' from raw materials. Reconstructing the external syntax structures in ST does not automatically lead to the representation of their literary features and in-depth meaning in TT. Though scholars do notice the existence of something 'under the surface' of utterances in poetry, it is still difficult to specify what it is, because each literary school embodies distinctive characteristics that cannot be generalised. Therefore, this study takes Wordsworth's romantic poems for experimental analysis, attempting to explore how to determine the literary uniqueness of certain poetic schools and reproduce it through appropriate strategies. An Integrated Linguistic Model (ILM) is designed for textual critical analysis: The *Skopos* Theory + Communicative and Semantic Translation. The former helps justify the criteria of 'representing romanticism' in translating Wordsworth's poems, while the latter describes avenues to meet those criteria. This model operates as a 'crucible' that facilitates 'transmutation' in an alchemical process. Lessons drawn from the analytical experiment are aimed to provide references for scholars as well as translators who focus on digging out hidden essence in literary translation.

Keywords: Poetry Translation, Romanticism, The *Skopos* Theory, Communicative and Semantic Translation

1. Introduction

1.1. Contextualising The Challenge

Envision this scenario: A Chinese reader with limited English proficiency reads a translated version of Wordsworth's poetry for literary appreciation. How can they intuitively recognise it as a romantic poem rather than a modernist or postcolonial one? Moving to an academic context: A Chinese scholar, also non-English-speaking, attempts to study romanticism in Wordsworth's poetry through Chinese translations. Under such circumstance, the translation bears greater responsibility to authentically convey the original literary essence, enabling readers to identify romantic characteristics through textual analysis. (Clarification: 'romanticism' in this article particularly refers to the literary school's essence, spirit and stylistic features, not the 18th–19th literary movement.)

This is exactly the focus of this study. In poetry translation, representing genre-specific essence is far more challenging than reconstructing linguistic form. Scholars widely acknowledge that utterances embody profound literary connotations, yet there are no clear criteria to evaluate whether translations successfully convey them. In view of establishing an universal standard remains impractical, this article proposes a method for analysing genre-specific textual features, i.e. through systematically

identifying the defining characteristics of certain genre, and developing targeted strategies to maximise the transfer of those hidden literary qualities. The goal is to reveal the profundity of the ST, amplifying the interpretive potential of literary translations.

1.2. Introducing William Wordsworth and Yang Deyu

All examples analysed in this article are selected from the book 华兹华斯诗选 (英汉对照) [*Selected Poems of William Wordsworth (English-Chinese)*], published by Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press. This book includes William Wordsworth's poetry (Source Text: ST) and corresponding Chinese translation (Target Text: TT) produced by Yang Deyu. Moreover, this article additionally provides, BT (Literal Back Translation) as a reference for Anglophone readers to engage with the Chinese TT in analysing examples. In line with those in Wordsworth's compilation, the poems in this book are classified according to their themes and styles.

William Wordsworth (1770–1850) is one of the most representative figures of English romanticism and the Lake Poets. Simplicity, freshness and sincerity are fundamental to his language. Wordsworth's doctrine of writing concerns the love of nature (Ransom, 1950), and many of his poems depict peasants' lives and rural beauty, sympathising underprivileged labouring groups and eulogising humanitarianism. With the spontaneous overflow of powerful genuine emotions, Wordsworth's poetry also embodies profound thoughts, because he always looked inward and sought for genius, power, creation and divinity (Wordsworth, 2017). The prosody of his poetry features iambus and trochee, so translating them requires delicate techniques of re-establishing rhythmical patterns.

Yang Deyu (1928–2013) is a renowned Chinese translator specialised in translating English poetry, and has devoted most of his life to this field. In addition to Wordsworth's poems, Yang's translation works also include poetry by other great poets such as Shakespeare, Byron and Coleridge. It has been widely recognised that Yang Deyu's translation versions largely represent original rhymes, retaining literary connotations and the unique charm of poetry.

1.3. Research Objectives and Questions

The research objective in this study is to examine Yang Deyu's reproduction of romanticism in translating Wordsworth's poems through a descriptive integrated linguistic model. The corresponding research questions are:

- (a) What could be the referential criteria of 'representing romanticism' in translating Wordsworth's poems?
- (b) How the *skopos* of 'representing romanticism' is met via Newmark's Communicative and Semantic Translation?

Through answering the research questions, this study further discusses whether the innovative ILM could be promoted in a wider scale of poetry translation, paving ways for future relevant studies.

1.4. Theoretical Framework and Methodology: The ILM

The theoretical framework is composed of two linguistic theories of translation, i.e., Vermeer's *Skopos* Theory and Newmark's Theory of Communicative and Semantic Translation. That is why it is named as an 'Integrated Linguistic Model (ILM)'. The formula is presented as:

$$\text{ILM} = \text{Skopos} + \text{CT\&ST}$$

This model is 'Ends-and-Means oriented'. The *Skopos* Theory identifies the 'Ends' (goals) and describes their significance, while the communicative translation and semantic translation (CT&ST) are the 'Means' (methods) to obtain the goals.

Firstly, *skopos* is the Greek word for 'aim' or 'purpose' and was introduced into translation theory in the 1970s by Hans J. Vermeer (Munday, 2008). This theory derives from action theory and highlights the importance of the aim in translation. In this study, the objective of translating Wordsworth's poems is perceived as reproducing its unique literary essence, i.e., romanticism, which is 'under the surface' of poetic utterances. That is why the specific criteria that a TT should meet to be considered as successfully reproducing romanticism of ST will be made in Chapter 3. Secondly, given that a translation theory alone is not enough to explain romanticism which is a literary concept, relevant knowledge in comparative literature will be involved in the application of the *Skopos* Theory. Therefore, the definition of romanticism by Isaiah Berlin (1909–1997, one of the most famous philosophers in the 20th century) is incorporated into the *skopos* analysis. His masterpiece *The Roots of Romanticism* is referred to in this study to explain the common central feature of romantic literary works. Furthermore, in view of each romantic poet has their personal composing style and unique interpretation on romanticism, the features of romanticism from Wordsworth's perspectives will be analysed as well. In practice, Vermeer's *Skopos* Theory will justify the criteria of 'representing romanticism' and the strategies that the translator (Yang Deyu) adopts. Yang's strategies are then decoded through the lens of Peter Newmark's Communicative and Semantic Translation.

The main methodology in this study is textual analysis grounded in the linguistic theoretical model, aiming to uncover Yang's hidden strategies of reproducing literary essence in translating the poems. In this process, theories serve as not only the reliable foundation but also tools that offer inspirations for comprehending Yang's decision-making processes. The lessons drawn from the textual analysis may enrich the applications of current theories in E-C poetry translation and generate referential strategies for translators to better cope with poetry translation.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Overview of Literary Translation

Literary translation was firstly promoted in the 1960s by the translation workshop concept in the USA (Munday, 2008). With the rising necessity of reading translated literature in comparative literature studies, literary translation gradually attracted more scholars' attention. Tackling challenges in literary translation not only facilitates trans-disciplinary studies but also enhances intercultural communications. Translating literary texts has long been unique as it deals with 'literary features and qualities' (Hermans, 2007, p. 79). However, the question is, to what extent could a TT be regarded as the one that successfully reflects the literary features and qualities of ST? The metric is often too vague for translation scholars to resort to.

2.2. Problem-Identification in Poetry Translation

This study is decided to concentrate on poetry instead of other literary genres because poetry is especially representative in literary study for dominating what literature is supposed to be (Lefevere, 1992), and it is more remarkable than other types of literary translation in terms of language issues, register and readership (Caselli & La, 2008). Various schools of poetry exhibit divergent literary features. For instance, readers of romantic compositions may be touched by the spring of emotion, passion and lyricism, while the realistic literature may display a sense of rigorousness and rationality through ironic skills. Therefore, studying poetry translation urges scholars to explore methods that effectively reflect unique characteristics of different schools of poems. However, as mentioned in 2.1, the criteria of 'literary features and qualities' remain implicit, making it challenging for scholars to determine the ST's 'literary features and qualities' and develop appropriate framework for translation analysis. Consequently, the arbitrariness in selecting theoretical models affects the transferability of some scholars' research findings. Salvato (2016) employed a functionalist approach based on Cristiane Nord's scientific theory to poetry translation. He begins by criticising some translators' reliance on intuition in literary translation, and advocates utilizing scientific methods. Interestingly, his conclusion admits that strict adherence to Nord's method is too rigid and literary translation inevitably requires intuition and creativity. This contradiction suggests his research design lacks a well-considered objective: its initial criticism should target on those 'over-intuitive' translation practices rather than dismissing intuition altogether, and illuminate in what cases scientific compensation is necessary.. That is why though Salvato acknowledges dogmatically applying scientific framework in poetry translation is not feasible, he did not shed light on what strategies are truly viable. Similarly, Kolahi and Shiraz (2012) analyses the translation of Sohrab Sepehri's poems through the theoretical lens of Lefevere's seven strategies, but their only justification for selecting this theory is 'Lefevere's strategies are inclusive enough to cover all poetic features' (p. 460), which is too arbitrary. Although they ultimately figure out the most frequently used Lefevere's strategy is 'literal translation' based on the corpus, it overlooks explaining why the discovery is meaningful and why 'literal translation' is the most suitable strategy just because it is frequently adopted. More problematically, the assumption of their study lies in 'the 7 strategies are mutually independent and often not integrated', because in real practice, translators usually combines strategies to achieve their goals.

2.3. The Essence 'Under the Surface' of Utterances

Since the early 21st century, scholars begin to acutely possess unique insight into the need of representing covert literary essence in translating poems. Dahlgren (2005, p.1081) adopted the expression 'essential elements under the surface of the utterances' when he studied the translation of Emily Dickens' poetry from a pragmatic standpoint. Several years later, Fadaee (2011, p.75) also proposed an approximate idea in researching English to Persian translation of Silverstein's poem: the difficulty in poetry translation concerns metaphorical concepts 'beyond literally meanings'. In the same year, Singh (2011) coincidentally pointed out that what should be preserved when translating poetry is the 'invisible message' of the poet, in order to obtain the same effect in the TL as it is in the SL. The three scholars' mentioned terms, namely 'essence under the surface of utterances', 'concepts beyond meanings' and 'invisible message' all indicate there must be something that transcends the literal expression and is close to the nature of poetry, but none of them elaborated on the 'mysterious' essence.

Though the 'essence under the surface of the utterances' is too abstract to be specified, at least it is relevantly feasible to make criteria for analysing and evaluating the translation of certain types/schools of poetry. Therefore, this study fills the gap by experimenting on Yang Deyu's translation of William Wordsworth's poems, in order to explore standards for the essence (romanticism) of the poetry and investigate suitable theoretical explanation of Yang's strategies.

3.The Criteria of 'Representing Romanticism' in Translating Wordsworth's Poems

3.1. Steps of Establishing the Criteria

This chapter answers the first research question proposed in the Introduction, i.e., 'What could be the referential criteria of "representing romanticism" in translating Wordsworth's poems?', by taking three steps to set such criteria for supporting the translation analysis.

Firstly, Isaiah Berlin's definition on romanticism is interpreted for specifying the expected romantic effects of translating Wordsworth's poems. Given the great diversity of various romantic literary works, this step is based on the defence that the review on Berlin's romantic theory is only to emphasise the 'central characteristics' of romanticism. Secondly, Wordsworth's personal style of composing romantic poems is elucidated. Combining it with the 'central characteristics' of romanticism elaborated in the first step, the metric of 'representing romanticism' in translating Wordsworth's poems is finally generated. Thirdly, Vermeer's *Skopos* Theory will be adopted to justify the criteria and reveal why Newmark's communicative translation and semantic translation are chosen as the corresponding translation strategies for analysing Yang's translation.

3.2. Isaiah Berlin's Definition on Romanticism and Wordsworth's Composing Style

Isaiah Berlin, one of the greatest thinkers of the twentieth century (Hardy, 2018), has searched for the definition of romanticism and elaborated its connotation comprehensively in his book *The Roots of Romanticism*. In the first chapter (*In Search of a Definition*) of this book, Berlin analyses the history of romanticism and presents various definitions of romanticism by different writers as well as critics. Contrary to A.O. Lovejoy (one of the most influential romantic scholars of the 19th to 20th century) who believes that the existing understandings towards romanticism by different scholars are irrelevant or even contradict to each other, Berlin (2001) still assures readers that there is indeed something central to Romanticism:

Those are the fundamental bases of romanticism: will, the fact that there is no structure to things, that you can mould things as you will - they come into being only as a result of your moulding activity - and therefore opposition to any view which tried to represent reality as having some kind of form which could be studied, written down, learnt, communicated to others, and in other respects treated in a scientific manner (p. 127).

According to this conclusion, when a romantic poet composes poems, s/he will not rigidly write the lines or artificially express any hypocritical spirit. Instead, a romantic product must reflect the composer's genuine will and imply the subtle trails of his/her feelings. The 'central characteristics of romanticism' could be generalised as 'the style of uninhibited expression and bold creation'. Therefore, a qualified TT of romantic poems should help readers embrace the free composition, unrestrained passions and natural emotions of the original work.

Having determined the central feature of romantic literature with Berlin's work, Wordsworth's romantic composing style is referred for enriching the criteria. Firstly, Wordsworth's deliberate simplicity and refusal to decorate the truth of experience produce a kind of pure and profound poetry (Wu, 2005). According to Hamilton (2010), his poetry also attempts to devise fresh modes of communication with readers, and resist the artificiality that distinguishes poetry from everyday speech. Similarly, Chen (2022) points out that the romanticism of his poems promotes people's sincere emotions that are simple rather than artificial, thus avoiding exaggerated rhetoric. Therefore, the uniqueness of Wordsworth's own style lies in at least three key points: simplicity, naturality and the resistance to artificiality. Applying this standard to translation, the TT should avoid unnecessary rhetoric decoration and maintain the natural expressions of feelings in the ST.

Based on the analysis above, 'representing romanticism' in translating William Wordsworth's poems features dual standards:

Standard of Natural Expression: The translation should be free, coherent and cannot be deliberately decorated by unnecessary rhetoric techniques, in order to preserve the simplicity.

Standard of Original Emotion: The translation should reflect the genuine original feelings that the author wants to express without being frequently intervened by the translator's personal interpretation as long as possible.

In the rest of this article, *Standard of Natural Expression* and *Standard of Original Emotion* will be abbreviated as SNE and SOE for convenience and conciseness. The formula of 'representing romanticism' in translation is yielded:

The Criteria of 'Representing Romanticism' = SNE + SOE
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3.3. The Skopos Theory for Justifying the Criteria

Faced with existing criticism that the *Skopos* Theory is not valid for literary texts, being too complex to have specific purposes (Munday, 2008), the application of *Skopos* Theory in this section challenges this stereotype, illustrating why 'aesthetic function' is a general purpose (*skopos*) in literary texts and why readers are also 'clients' and their needs should be properly addressed by translators, through developing a 3-step justification for the criteria made in 3.2.:

- (1) Why the goal (*skopos*) is worth achieving;
- (2) For whom the translation would be valuable;
- (3) How to translate, and accord to what strategy;

Firstly, the *Skopos* Theory derives from action theory, under the framework of which, translation is viewed as an action with purpose (Du, 2012). In this sense, an actor (translator) should assess the current status (source texts) and compare it to the *skopos* (Reiss & Vermeer, 2014), because the latter being better than the former could be the reason for acting. In this study, the *skopos* refers to 'helping the targeted readers grasp and appreciate romanticism of the ST'. This *skopos* is worth achieving because it facilitates cross-culture literary studies through reflecting the original poetry essence. Even if some translators' purposes are secular, such as the successful publication of their work, financial reward, or earning reputation, these do not conflict with the *skopos* of 'providing better translations for readers to access literary essence and aesthetic enjoyment', because readers and publications are more willing to accept qualified translation. The *Skopos* Theory is not purely instrumental or profit-centred. In contrast, due to the common purpose of 'recreating aesthetics', it could be applied to literary works despite their diverse styles. Especially when this study has theoretically clarified the main features of romanticism as much as possible in the previous chapter, based on which, the *Skopos* Theory can further support later analysis of translation strategies.

Secondly, according to the *skopos* rule (the core concept of the *skopos* theory), human action is determined by its *skopos* and therefore it is a function of its purpose (Schäffner, 1998). More importantly, the function is specified by the addressee (Jabir, 2006), whose needs as well as social/cultural situations jointly determine the translator's *skopos* of translation. Notwithstanding in many situations, the application of *Skopos* Theory is to deal with functional texts such as commercial contracts, legal documents, and sci-tech instructions for targeted clients, poetry readers are also 'clients' in the context of this study. Readers of Wordsworth's poetry mainly include college students, members of the MLA, literary critics, and individual

poets. Understanding the literary uniqueness of poetry is their basic need for conducting research, and addressing this need constitutes both the translator's burden and *skopos*.

Thirdly, the *skopos* not only determines whether something is transferred and what is transferred, but also how it is transferred, i.e., according to which strategy (Reiss & Vermeer, 2014). In order to realise the *skopos*, the criteria of 'representing romanticism' should be met. Therefore, the SNE and SOE are supposed to be reached through suitable translation strategies. According to Newmark (1981), communicative translation emphasises 'manner', featuring smoother and simpler language; semantic translation highlights the 'matter', being close to the original nuanced meaning. The former strategy apparently caters to the SNE for generating natural and simple expressions while the latter adapts to the SOE for uncovering nuanced emotions. That is why this article argues that semantic and communicative translation match the requirements of the *skopos* to a considerable extent. Last but not least, Newmark (1981) also stresses that communicative and semantic methods are in fact widely overlapping bands of methods, which further indicates that the adoption of both semantic and communicative translation proportionally is to fulfill the SNE and SOE simultaneously.

4. Communicative Translation in Search for the Stylistic Equivalence

4.1. Communicative Translation and 'Functional' Poems

This chapter, together with Chapter 5 will answer the second research question 'How the *skopos* of "representing romanticism" is met via Newmark's Communicative and Semantic Translation?'. The poem (*London, 1802*) for analysis in this chapter is a 'functional' poem for not only manifesting Wordsworth's own feelings, but also raising readers' awareness of remediating their society and fighting for democracy. As mentioned previously, all translation must be in some degree both communicative and semantic and it is a matter of different emphasis (Newmark, 1981). Communicative translation is highlighted more than semantic aspects in analysing the translation of *London, 1802* because it stresses the effect on readers and its fundamental task is to make readers think, feel and/or act (Newmark, 1981).

The language style of the poem features the usage of metaphors, bold expressions, mixture of long and short sentences, and creative syntax structures. That is why literal translation is far from reproducing close communicative effects of the ST. Faced with this challenge, Yang flexibly work on the utterances of TT for better stylistic equivalence, in accordance with Newmark's theoretical recognition that a translator has the right to correct or improve the logic, replace clumsy with elegant, or at least functional, syntactic structures for communicative purpose (1981).

4.2. The Communicative Purpose in Wordsworth's *London, 1802*

Understanding the communicative purpose in *London, 1802* and linking it to the criteria of 'representing romanticism' is a crucial step for analysing the translation of this poem.

London, 1802 is one of the poems in Wordsworth's anthology 'Poems Dedicated to National Independence and Liberty', which is set in supporting the independence of European countries and fighting against Napoleon's military expansion and aggression. At the beginning of the 19th century, Wordsworth envisioned the urgency for the British to overcome societal problems such as corruption, bureaucracy and the widening gap between the rich and the poor. His main incentive of composing this poem is to expect that revolutionary poets like Milton will stand out and lead British people to rescue the society (Pan, 2001). Through this poem, Wordsworth was communicating with the British people in that era, hoping that they may make changes. This communicative purpose reflects Wordsworth's patriotism and humanitarianism, the reproduction of which will meet the SOE (Standard of Original Emotion). In terms of 'representing romanticism', the realisation of SNE (Standard of Natural Expression) is inseparable from the communicative translation for stylistic equivalence.

4.3. Enjambment in Translation: Strategic Punctuation and Syntax Reconstruction

Enjambment refers to 'nonalignment of (end of) metrical frame and syntactic period at line-end: the overflow into the following poetic line of a syntactic phrase (with its intonational contour) begun in the preceding line without a major juncture or pause' (Preminger & Brogan, 1993, p.359). The application of this literary skill is shown in Example 1. Successfully coping with the translation of enjambment helps recreate the communicative style in the first place.

Example 1: (*London, 1802*, pp. 214-215)

ST:

Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;
Oh! raise us up, return to us again;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power. (p. 214)

TT:

断送了内心安恬——古老风尚：
世风日下，我们都汲汲营私；
哦！回来吧，快来把我们扶持，
给我们良风，美德，自由，力量！ (p. 215)

BT:

Having ruined the inner bliss—ancient customs:
Social morality fades, and we eagerly purse self-interests;
Oh! Come back, and support us,

Bring us manners, virtue, freedom, power.

In ST, *ancient English dower* in line 1 and *Of inward happiness* in line 2 together form an integrated syntactic phrase ‘ancient English dower of inward happiness’, referring to the admirable social mores of Britain’s past. The enjambment implies that the metrical pattern of line 1 is completed but its syntactic and semantic period is continued in line 2. This technique heightens readers’ tension and catches their attention. However, applying literal translation to represent this enjambment would only end up with awkwardness, which is apparently opposite to the goal of communicative translation. The LT of *ancient...happiness* is: 古老风尚/关于内在的幸福. This Chinese expression is unnatural and clumsy, no matter whether it is enjambed or not, because using a post-positive attributive to modify its head word is generally unacceptable in Chinese.

Comparatively, Yang’s strategy is wiser. He firstly relocates the translation of *Of inward happiness* to the first line and uses a dash to connect it with 古老风尚 [ancient English dower], and secondly adds a colon to imply that the syntactic meaning is to be continued in line 2, which is of the same effect of enjambment. The flexibility of using punctuation (i.e., a dash and a colon) and restructuring the sentences to represent the original stylistic and communicative function makes it easy for readers to grasp the semantic linkage of the two phrases and appreciate the charm of enjambment.

4.4. Chinese Idioms for Reader Reception

Nevertheless, a new problem occurred as the enjambed sentence *Have forfeited...inward happiness* is restructured and condensed into line 1 via translation, leaving the original position of *Of inward happiness* absent. Line 2 still needs to contain 5 feet for maintaining the iambic pentameter, but literally translating *We are selfish men* into 我们都是自私的人 apparently does not fulfill that.

In order to tackle this challenge, Yang adds a Chinese four-character idiom 世风日下 [literal translation for each character: society, atmosphere, day, down] to compensate the absent position without adding excessive semantic meaning. The former two characters together refer to the general social environment, and the latter two characters 日 [day] and 下 [down (extended meaning: worse)] jointly describe a situation that something becomes worse day after day. Therefore, the idiom 世风日下 means the social decline, which is actually a summary of line 1 and does not over-decorate the semantic meaning.

In communicative translation, a proper stylistic embroidering, or a careful modulation is condoned, as long as the readers are suitably impressed (Newmark, 1981). Yang’s action of adding a Chinese idiom actually belongs to this ‘stylistic embroidering’ as it preserves the iambic pentameter and facilitates the coherence of TT (conforming to SNE). Meanwhile it does not involve redundant meaning to intervene the expression of original emotion (conforming to SOE). In this way, the criteria of ‘representing romanticism’ are well fulfilled.

Besides 世风日下, Yang translates the phrase *are selfish men* into a four-character Chinese idiom 汲汲营私 [literal translation for each character: absorb, absorb, manage, self-interest; free translation: pursue personal interests eagerly]. The use of idiom here has at least two functions. Firstly, 私 is pronounced as ‘si’ and rhymed with 持 [support], which is the last character in line 3 and pronounced as ‘chi’. This pair of end rhymes represents the medial couplet (BB) in the ABBA envelope rhyme, reconstituting the rhythmical style and thus complying with the SNE. Secondly, there is no significant semantic difference between 汲汲营私 and *are selfish men*. Based on the preservation of original meaning, the use of Chinese idiom further enhances reader affinity and facilitates acceptance in cross-cultural communication, so that the target readers may better resonate with the underlying emotions of this poem (in line with SOE). The communicative effect is skillfully achieved.

In a short summary, Yang has paid much attention to balancing linguistic features and the semantic meaning in the translation process of ‘representing romanticism’. This chapter’s analysis reveals the variety of his personal skills, including restructuring sentences, arranging punctuation, and employing suitable idioms. While these methods align with the framework of communicative and semantic translation, their effective application requires translators’ experiential judgment to determine when and for what purpose to deploy them.

5. Semantic Translation in Search for Subtle Connotation

5.1. Semantic Focus and Background of ‘Hart-leap Well’

Another remarkable anthology of Wordsworth’s poetry is ‘poems of the imagination’, which concerns allegory, storytelling, fictional elements and connotations. The poem analysed in this chapter (*Hart-leap Well*) is selected from this anthology. Different from *London, 1802*, semantic rather than communicative translation is placed more emphasis in translating *Hart-leap Well* because it concerns balancing the proportion of denotation and connotation in the original text (Newmark, 1981), and the connotative and allegorical aspects are more fundamental in ‘poems of imagination’. Although both SOE (Standard of Original Emotion) and SNE (Standard of Natural Expression) seem to have no direct relationships with connotation, whether it is true or not remains to be verified. Therefore, this chapter is going to investigate how the interpretation of connotation is realised in satisfying the criteria of ‘representing romanticism’.

According to Wordsworth, ‘Hart-leap Well’ is a small spring of water in Yorkshire. Its name is derived from a remarkable Chase, the memory of which is preserved by the monuments spoken of in the second part of the poem. Before the 17th century, ancient Greek philosophy and the Old Testament indicated that humans were superior to animals and were the masters of them. By Wordsworth’s time, British attitudes towards animals have changed considerably. From the end of the 17th century to the present day, many people have been fighting against the mistreatment of animals. The idea of protecting nature and animals is

becoming popular. Wordsworth's *Hart-leap Well* is one of such poems against hunting (Jiang & Zhang, 2010). It condemns the anthropocentric attitude and tends to reconsider the relationship between animals and humans.

This long poem tells a story of hunting. In the beginning part, the hunting teams were chasing after their prey. As the event went on, Sir Walter, the protagonist, was left behind, because he was chasing a hart with full attention. Finally the hart exerted all its strength to jump desperately for three times but fell dead in the valley near the spring. After that, a bower and pillars were constructed by the spring and named 'Hart-leap Well'. In the second part of this poem, Wordsworth tells through the shepherd's mouth the changes that occurred after the hart's death, and the lessons drawn from Walter's hunting.

5.2. Lexical Precision in Translating Connotative Nuances

Example 2 is a selected stanza from the first part of this poem, depicting a scenario of Walter's hunting. The nuanced connotation and delicate emotion are mainly about condemnation of the hunter's anthropocentric arrogance, reflected by the characterisation of Walter's confidence and ambition. The translation of this stanza should help readers feel the criticism against anthropocentrism and resonate with Wordsworth's hope of the harmonious relationship between nature and humans.

Example 2 (*Hart-leap Well*, pp. 114-131)

ST:

Joy sparkled in the prancing courser's eyes;
The horse and horseman are a happy pair;
But, though Sir Walter like a falcon flies,
There is a doleful silence in the air. (p. 114)

TT:

骑士和坐骑简直是天生一对：
腾跃的骏马两眼闪耀着欢乐；
沃尔特纵马疾驰，似鹰隼高飞，
气氛里却含有令人忧郁的沉默。(p. 115)

BT:

The Knight and the horse are born a perfect match;
The prancing horse's two eyes shine with joy;
Walt rides the horse at an extreme speed, like a falcon flies high,
The air yet includes a doleful silence;

In this translation, precise words as translation equivalents were carefully selected to represent the connotations of essential expressions. For example, the image of 'sparkling joy', adjectives like 'prancing' and 'happy' and the metaphor of 'flying falcon' in ST jointly reveal the connotation that Walter is eager to win the hunt without caring about nature and animals. In TT, Yang adopted the Chinese word 闪耀 [shine strongly] instead of other synonyms like 闪烁 [shine from time to time] or 闪现 [shine and appear] to translate the word *sparkled*, because the character 耀 stands for strong light (e.g., fire's light), which is suitable to modify Walt's intense joy in the competitive and exciting hunting activity. Through the successful reproduction of the image, not only the SOE is realised, but also the connotation is embodied. Comparatively, the words 闪烁 or 闪现 may not reach such effect, because the former is usually used to describe dim light (e.g., a candle's light) in Chinese, while the latter's semantic emphasis is 'appear', which is not enough for expressing the extreme joy either. The word selection here is more semantic than communicative because the translator tends to focus on the context and the poet's thought-process to better retain the original connotation.

In addition to the accurate translation of semantic meaning, Yang also guarantees the form are reproduced well. For example, the end rhyme 'eyes and flies' and 'pair and air' are transformed into '对(duì) and 飞(fēi)' and '乐(lè) and 默(mò)'. The former Chinese pair rhymes in vowels and the latter rhymes in tones. Although his balance between meaning and form is elegant, there are still trade-offs: through comparing the BT to ST, it can be discovered that the lines are reconstructed to a large extent. For instance, the sequence of line 1 and line 2 in ST is actually reversed in TT and BT. The side-effect may be that if a Chinese reader does not understand English, s/he can not grasp Wordsworth's original composing sequence and stream of consciousness. Nonetheless, translators always have to make a choice.

5.3. Semantic Refinement for Communicative Compensation

Having examined how semantic translation retains the original emotions (SOE) and represents the nuanced connotation of ST, this section further elaborates how proper semantic adjustment helps realise the communicative goal and meet the SNE, based on the following prosody analysis:

Division of Feet in Line 4 of Example 2:

ST: There is | a doleful | silence | in the | air. (p. 114)

TT: 气氛里 | 却含有 | 令人 | 忧郁的 | 沉默。(p. 115)

BT: The air yet includes a doleful silence.

Obviously, it is a pattern of iambic pentameter (five feet per line). The translator literally translate *doleful* into 令人忧郁的. Nevertheless, the former's syllables, i.e., /'dəʊlfəl/ are apparently less than those of the latter, i.e., 'ling ren you yu de', which requires that other parts in this line should contain less syllables than their ST to make the number of feet remains the same in TT. Faced with this challenge, Yang wisely omits the translation of 'there be' phrase, which is redundant in Chinese grammar, so this omission does not affect any semantic meaning. Besides, if *There is* is rigidly translated, the TT will be 那里有一个忧

郁的沉默在气氛里, which is awkward and even amusing for Chinese readers. Therefore, Yang's strategy is 'to kill two birds with one stone', keeping the number of syllables to reproduce the iambic pentameter as well as avoiding awkward Chinese expressions in TT. Compared to the amplification of a Chinese idiom 世风日下 in Example 1, it can be discovered that no matter it is 'adding' or 'omitting' elements, the intention is to better reproduce the metrical pattern. Drawing on this case, we observe that flexible semantic refinement in translation facilitates the natural expression (SNE), which is in accordance with Newmark's point that a semantic translation is not rigid, since the SL words and sentences are operative as a form of control (1981).

5.4. Semantic Interpretation for Contextual Connotation

Example 3 is the last stanza of the whole poem, and its expression of emotion largely hinges on the contextual tension: human's aggression versus animals' vulnerability. Yang actively interprets the semantic meaning of ST rather than rely on literal translation in response to the specific poetic field.

Example 3 (*Hart-leap Well*, pp. 114-131):

ST:

One lesson, Shepherd, let us two divide,
Taught both by what she shows, and what conceals;
Never to blend our pleasure or our pride
With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels. (p. 130)

TT:

她所展现的, 她所隐藏的, 这两者
包含着教诲, 牧人呵, 你我要恭听:
我们的欢情豪兴里, 万万不可
麝入任何微贱生灵的不幸。” (p. 131)

BT:

What she showed, what she hid, these two
Include the truth, oh Shepherd, we should listen respectfully:
In our pleasure and exuberance, never
Bring in any humble lives' misfortune.

The main idea of *Hart-leap Well* is unfolded: Respect nature and all living things; Being humble and being kind. In ST, this philosophy is especially embodied in the semantic collision between *our pleasure or our pride* and *sorrow of the meanest thing*. Therefore, the key is to find suitable translation equivalence of the two phrases that can best heighten the context. Yang uses 豪兴 [grandeur plus enthusiasm] and 生灵 [life with spirit/soul] to translate *pride* and *thing* (it refers to 'life' in the context) rather than their literal translation 骄傲 and 事物. The translator grasps the contextual meaning and semantically interprets it through translation, which is essential for uncovering the connotation, whereas literal translation is insufficient as it simply conveys the denotation. The basic difference between semantic and literal translation is that the former respects contexts, while the latter does not (Newmark, 1981). That is why semantic translation sometimes has to interpret. In Wordsworth's context, stressing human's pride on bullying other species brutally is to show how animals suffer hopelessly. Therefore, 豪兴 [grandeur plus enthusiasm], meaning 'a feeling of deep pleasure or satisfaction derived from one's own achievements' in Chinese culture, functionally triggers criticism towards it, which is stronger in effect than 骄傲 [pride]. For the same reason, compared to 事物 [thing] / 生命 [life], the word 生灵 [life with spirit/soul] better reveals the connotation that each life being tortured can actually feel the sufferance because of their soul. In this way, not only the reproduced connotation entails the criticism of human's arrogance (SOE), but also the vivid targeted texts cater to the SNE. Different from the lexical selection discussed in 5.2, this section's semantic interpretation involves a higher degree of the translator's agency and intervention. The example in 5.2 is about selecting the most suitable translation equivalence when a set of Chinese synonyms could represent an English word (e.g., 闪耀 闪烁 闪现 for *sparkle*). However, this section's examples (i.e., 豪兴 and 生灵) reflects an action of 'supplementing necessary meaning' in translation because some connotation is hidden in the contexts, which may not be easily expressed by literal translation in another language.

Collectively, this chapter indicates the significant relationship between semantic translation and connotation. A translator's profound comprehension of the ST as well as its context, is the foundation for conducting semantic adjustment, in order to better reproduce the subtle connotation. Simultaneously, the communicative effects are still realised due to the semantic operations that make the languages expressive.

6. Conclusion

6.1. Answers for Research Questions

In answering 'What could be the referential criteria of "representing romanticism" in translating Wordsworth's poems?', this study generates dual criteria, i.e., Standard of Natural Expressions (SNE) and Standard of Original Emotions (SOE), through integrating Isaiah Berlin's elaboration on core features of romanticism with the analysis of Wordsworth's composing styles. In response to 'How the *skopos* of "representing romanticism" is met via Newmark's communicative and semantic

translation?', this study respectively explores how the relevant emphasis on communicative and semantic parts help the translator reproduce the stylistic features for communicative purpose and uncover connotations for emotional resonance.

6.2. Contributions and Limitations

Reviewing the research gap in the status quo, many scholars have noticed the essence 'under the surface' of utterances, but few of them have specified that or propose a metric that evaluates whether a translation reflects the essence or not. While this study admits the fact that generalising the 'essence' is not feasible, it creatively designs an ILM to bridge the gap, which explains what is the essence 'under the surface' of utterance in romantic literary works to certain extent. The intention to focus on romanticism first and expect the extension to other literary schools is analogous to studying the Sun as an initial step to understand stellar phenomena in general.

Although the SNE and SOE still involve subjective judgement (different scholars may possess divergent understandings towards 'natural' or 'original'), it cannot be denied that this 'subjectivity' is inevitable and exactly the nature of romanticism, which highlights this model's uniqueness. Moreover, the target readers' cultural backgrounds and aesthetic levels were not investigated. Adopting a mixed-methods approach (questionnaires and interviews) would make the *skopos*-analysis more comprehensive. Lastly, though communicative and semantic translation explain the Yang's translation decisions well, his various skills such as restructuring sentences to suit the metrical pattern, arranging punctuation to realise the function of enjambment, and using idioms to compensate the absent feet, are more likely derived from his personal experience, not necessarily from the guidance of the theory. However, these 'personal skills' are anyway uncovered through this study's theoretical analysis. Therefore, the documented strategies may be helpful for other translators to refer to.

6.3. Significance and Future Outlook

Generally, this study is experimental and practical, shifting the attention from classic 'faithfulness' debate in translation study to innovating theoretical models for solving tangible problems, though it is 'a long long way'. In future studies, firstly the potential for integrating different theories in novel ways can continue to be explored and validated. Besides, the ILM, as translator's 'crucible', can be further tested in other romantic literary works by different writers from more countries (e.g., William Butler Yeats, Edgar Allan Poe, Victor Hugo, etc.) for development. Thirdly, introducing empirical methods (e.g., Corpus-based study) to enrich the SNE and SOE are necessary, making the criteria of 'representing romanticism' more systematic.

The 'Philosopher's stone' is reproduced—readers' access to romanticism cannot be separated with translator's in-depth comprehension of it, and their endeavor to represent it through skillful approaches. Crystallising theoretical models seek not to dissolve the romantic essence, but to chart reliable pathways for its actualisation.

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