

Research on the Characteristics and Translation Strategies of Transferred Epithet

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Type of Work: Peer-Reviewed

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21013/jems.v16.n1.p7>

How to cite this paper:

Wang, X., Tian, C. (2020). Research on the Characteristics and Translation Strategies of Transferred Epithet. *IRA International Journal of Education and Multidisciplinary Studies* (ISSN 2455-2526), 16(1), 36-47. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21013/jems.v16.n1.p7>

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ABSTRACT

English transferred epithet is a figure of speech that is frequently used, especially in literary works. It works like magic and plays an important role in expression and communication, so a number of scholars have researched it from the aspects of the definition, the classification, the functions, the pragmatic characteristics, the semantic characteristics and the cognitive foundation of it. Though transferred epithet seems to deviate from logic, it can polish expressions if known and used efficiently. In this paper, the characteristics and translation strategies are studied. Based on the related theories of semantics, aesthetics, and translatology, the structural characteristics, the semantic characteristics, the aesthetic characteristics and the translation strategies of transferred epithet are discussed. This paper is of both theoretical and practical significance. If readers can draw inferences about other cases from one instance and have a good command of transferred epithet, it can be properly employed in such language activities as reading, writing, speaking, translation, etc.

Keywords: transferred epithet; structural characteristics; semantic characteristics; aesthetic value; translation strategies

1. Introduction

Various figures of speech are usually employed both in literary works and in daily life. Every figure of speech has its typical forms and characteristics. The transferred epithet is not an exception. More and more researches have been done on them. With the knowledge of these figures of speech, we are able to appreciate many literary works as well as to improve our abilities of reading, writing, translation, and speaking.

The transferred epithet, also called hypallage, is an unconventional collocation, which is similar to “移就” (Yijiu) in Chinese. Transferred epithet bears the features of vividness and brevity (Zhang, 2006). It has been studied by rhetoricians, linguists, and psychologists from many aspects. Most researches are about the pragmatic features, cognitive foundation, the function, and translation of it. And in this paper, the characteristics of transferred epithet and the translation of it from English to Chinese are analyzed in detail.

This paper consists of five separate but closely related parts. The first part gives a brief introduction to the whole paper, which includes the research objective and the organization of the paper. The second part presents the profile of transferred epithet from the aspects of its definition, the pragmatic research, and cognitive research on it. In part three, the characteristics of transferred epithet are discussed, which composes the structural characteristics, the semantic characteristics and the aesthetic characteristics of it. In the fourth part, the translation strategies of transferred epithet from English to Chinese are studied, including principles and methods of the translation. Part five draws a conclusion for this paper. A summary of the paper is made and the prospect for further researches is presented.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Definition of Transferred Epithet

As an effective figure of speech, English transferred epithet has drawn such much attention from rhetoricians, linguists, psychologists, and other scholars that they devoted themselves to make research on it, so a considerable amount of scholars have had a different definition of transferred epithet.

In *Manual of English Grammar and Composition* (1964) Nesfield and Wood defines transferred epithet in this way, “when two impressions are associated together in the mind, an epithet that properly belongs to one only is transferred to the other. One of the commonest, though not the only, application of this figure is when some personal quality is transferred to something inanimate”. In *A Dictionary of Literary Terms*, hypallage, also named transferred epithet, is defined as “a figure of speech in which the epithet is transferred from the appropriate noun to modify another which it doesn’t really belong to” (Cuddon, 1979). Lanham (1991) explains in *A Handbook of Rhetorical Terms* that “transferred epithet is a change in the relation of words by which a word, instead of agreeing with the case it logically qualifies, is made grammatically with another case”. Huang (1996) defined transferred epithet that an adjective is used to modify a noun grammatically but not logically. However, the relationship between the adjective and the noun is close in a certain context so that it can be understood by people. It was also defined as “a figure of speech in which the transferred epithet is transferred from the appropriate

noun to modify another to which it does not really belong” (Li, 2001). Halliday, a system-functional linguist, defines epithet: “The epithet indicates some quality of the subject, eg. old, long, blue, fast. This may be an objective property of the thing itself; or it may be an expression of the speaker’s attitude toward it, such as splendid, silly, fantastic.”

Though the definitions of transferred epithet are different, the nature of them is the same. First of all, the transferred epithet is a figure of speech. Secondly, this language phenomenon must consist of two parts: the transferred part and the center part. Finally, the modifying part and the modified part are in accordance with grammar principles, but it seems to violate logicity.

2.2 Pragmatic Research on Transferred Epithet

Traditional rhetorical research which mainly focused on the expressive effects of rhetorical devices were not profound. Liu(2003) considers that traditional rhetorical studies are just attempting to collect all kinds of real entities, namely, examples. Strictly speaking, that cannot be considered as true research. Since the beginning of the 20th century, rhetorical research has been developing in different aspects and great results have been achieved. Meanwhile, many scholars have paid a lot of attention to it.

One of the most significant purposes of the pragmatic study of it is to research the application of specific expressions in a certain context to find out how people produce and express utterances in various circumstances. Some oral expression featured by transferred epithet in daily life is conventional and automatic so that its aesthetic value can seldom be sensed. With the guidance of pragmatic theories, expression developed to automatization from deviation, and the transferred epithet is not an exception. Li(2001) argues that the transferred epithet does not violate the cooperative principle from the perspective of pragmatics, which includes four maxims: quantity, quality, relevance, and manner. Here is an example, “the thief made a trembling confession of his wrongdoings”. Three pieces of basic information exist in this sentence: The thief made a confession; the thief was trembling when he made a confession; the thief did wrongdoings. The meaning of the transferred epithet is clear and the expression is concise. And it is reasonable for a thief to tremble when he is caught. It can be said that the expression of transferred epithet can be generated and understood successfully, and the core of it is that it conforms to the maxims of the cooperative principle.

The transferred epithet is usually generated in a certain context rather than at random. It is widely acknowledged that the usage of most rhetoric aims to achieve an expressive effect, such as vividness, novelty, humor and so on. Only with a certain context, all these can be judged. The main cause of generating and understanding transferred epithet is that it conforms to the context. For instance, “as if to emphasize the difficulties that any prevention program has to face, you had had only to walk through any exit to find little groups enjoying a quiet cigarette”. In this sentence, a quiet cigarette is transferred epithet. According to the source text (ST), smoking is banned and there is a prevention program of smoking, so smokers furtively smoke. Quiet is transferred to modify a cigarette. Readers can understand how smokers smoked in the context. This expression fits the maxims of the cooperative principle and the context.

2.3 Cognitive Research on Transferred Epithet

In recent years, more and more scholars do research on rhetoric from the angle of cognition. Liu (2004) and Wu (2006) have done research on cognitive rhetoric. A book *Cognitive Rhetoric* written by R.Chen (2003) has been published, which is a new complement to traditional rhetorical research.

Cheng (2007) considers that the English transferred epithet is generated on the basis of the contiguous association. It is a figure of speech as well as a way for people to view and perceive the world. He studied the characteristics and functions of transferred epithet and also probes into the formation of it in the way of space mapping theory. Transferred epithet is analyzed by Luo (2009) from the perspective of conceptual integration theory. According to conceptual integration theory, meaning construction is regarded as an on-line process, namely, the meaning production is a dynamic process.

2.4 Summary

What has been discussed above presents a general introduction to transferred epithet to readers. In short, various researches on transferred epithet is made varying from the definition, the pragmatics, cognition and so on. In the flowing parts, the characteristics and translation strategies will be studied.

3. The Characteristics of Transferred Epithet

As we know, it is easy to understand regular collections of words, at least for native speakers. The regular collection means that the relationships between the words which are formed together as collections are in line with the disciplines of grammar structure and logic. For instance, in a sentence, every word plays a role or part, and while it collects in other words, it would be restricted by its part of speech. Nevertheless, poetic language is different. In many cases, people would violate the regularities to form irregular collocations. In this way, the irregular collocations would create the magic effect of aesthetics. The transferred epithet is a typical example of irregular collocations as well as of the preference of poetic language, which is usually used from Francis Bacon to T. S. Eliot. Why is it preferred by the masters of literature? As far as I am concerned, it's undoubted that the transferred epithet makes works attractive because of its characteristics.

3.1 The Structural Characteristics of Transferred Epithet

Any continual language must conform to certain order and structure, and so does transferred epithet, whose structures can be found in line with some principles. There are certain structures of transferred epithet after plenty of related materials are read and analyzed.

1)“adjective + central word (a noun)” For example, “he behaved with guilty caution and rather enjoyed stealing a march on Doctor Ed”.2)“present participle + central word (a noun)” For instance, “all the time the creeping fear that he would never come back to her grew strong within her”. 3)“past participle + central word (a noun)” For example, “his recent kindness was winning a surprised gratitude from the lonely girl”. 4)“central word (a noun) + of + modifier (a noun)” For instance, “grapes of wrath”.5)“central word (a noun) + adjective (compliment)” For example, “Bells made the trembling air Catholic”.

3.2 The Semantic Characteristics of Transferred Epithet

In normative language expression, sentence structures are certain. We readers usually can read through text easily and understand the information that the text contains quickly. But transferred epithet, as a figure of speech, is not normative language expression, which can bring a feeling of novelty and beauty. Actually, this effect of language is decided by the semantic characteristics of transferred epithet. Compared with regular language forms, transferred epithet—“a language error”—has its own unique characteristics.

3.2.1 The Contradictoriness of the Semantic Characteristics

The collocation of words is the result of each other's choice but not to be formed at random. Every word has a net which it can choose. If two words can form a language structure, they must have the same semantic characteristics, or they cannot collocate together. This is a logical and grammatical collocation. However, in the transferred epithet, obviously, the semantic choices of the central part and the transferred part are totally different, and the collocation of them violates syntactic rules, so it generates the contradictoriness of the semantic characteristics. The superficially contradictory information can be consistent in a deeper meaning, so it makes readers or audiences feel reasonable. The contradictoriness of the semantic characteristics between the transferred part and the central part is specular to transferred epithet(Huang, 2002).

An example is given here, “parenthetically, let me admit that it is not easy to crack all those nut jokes. But I will resist. You will get no cheap laughs from this article”.It is not appropriate that cheap collocates with a laugh from a regular aspect, because it seems superficially contradictory. In this text, they come to consistent in deep meaning by potential metaphor. Cheap is usually used to describe something that costs a little. And laugh which is abstract and unmeasured is like something specific that can be measured here. If readers or audiences can find this covered contact, it will be easy to comprehend “cheap laugh”. “Cheap laugh” means a laugh that can be gotten without efforts or without deliberate thinking in this context.

3.2.2 The Temporality of the Semantic Characteristics

What is the temporality of semantic characteristics? It mainly includes creativity, variability, and dependency on context. Regular phrases are certain, and a word modifies another word in accordance with certain principles. However, in the literature field, especially in poetry and prose, it is a common occasion for writers to break those principles to create novelty of language and personally subjective experience of the objective world. And transferred epithet is one of the most effective approaches. This

figure of speech is not static because it has a heavy dependency on context. Though the central part borrows the meaning of the transferred part, it won't have the same meaning as the original one. This borrowing meaning will be returned when it finishes its mission of communication, so it presents the temporality of semantic characteristics.

For example, “and, as if to emphasize the difficulties that any prevention program has to face, you had only to walk through any exit to find little groups enjoying a quiet cigarette”. “Quiet” is usually used to describe the environment without noise, but it is employed to modify cigarette, an item which cannot make sound or noise. According to the context, we can learn that smokers smoke on the sneak so that there is no noise or sound. “Quiet” means smokers smoke quietly, and “quiet” is transferred to modify the “cigarette”. The success of transferred epithet here owes to the context and the creativity of the writer. As we can see, only in this context, it is reasonable and attractive to employ “quiet” to modify “cigarette”, or it has not such a meaning—in a quiet way or on the sneak—that context put on it, which entails the temporality of semantic characteristics.

3.3 The Aesthetic Characteristics of Transferred Epithet

A lot of scholars have probed into the aesthetic characteristics of transferred epithet, such as Xie Xueming, Wu Jun, Luo Xiaosuo, etc. And they have written articles about them. It is concluded that there mainly exist these functions of aesthetics: color, novelty, connotation, conciseness, and humor. I will analyze the aesthetic characteristics of transferred epithet from the aspect of aesthetics. Aesthetics is a science of the relationship between humans and the universe, namely, it is beauty-appreciation whose subject is the image world, which is a part of human spiritual and cultural life.

3.3.1 The Beauty of Color in Transferred Epithet

The color words are often employed in the transferred epithet, and they bring special feelings of beauty because the modified part is permeated with powerful emotion that colors contribute to. Sometimes being imaginative and sensitive is necessary for the process of understanding the collocations featured by transferred epithet as color words, the transferred part, usually does not have a direct connection with the central part. For instance, “gray peace pervaded the wilderness-ringed Argentia Bay in Newfoundland, where the American ships anchored to await the arrival of Winston Churchill” (Hernan Wouk: *The Winds of War*). As we know, peace cannot be modified by color words under a general condition because it is an abstract word without the feature of color. But, it can be accepted that gray is used to modify peace here because the solemnity of gray is transferred to peace. Here, we can say the poetic beauty benefits from the beauty of color.

3.3.2 The Beauty of Novelty in Transferred Epithet

Transferred epithet brings the beauty of novelty to text, which bases on non-continuity of time and space. The famous modern Western linguist Roman Jakobson holds the idea that poetic language is the product of the counterforce exerted by people to the regular language. It is counterforce from deliberation, reversal, and distortion of language that makes it “unfamiliar”. Here is an example, “I enjoy the clean voluptuousness of the warm breeze on my skin and the cool support of the water”(V. Sackville, *West: No Signposts in the Sea*). At first sight, this sentence presents the beauty of novelty before people. “Clean” and “cool” should modify “breeze” and “water” respectively, but they are employed to modify “voluptuousness” and “support” respectively, which breaks the regulation of grammar. This sentence conveys the information of comfort and brings the beauty of novelty to readers.

3.3.3 The Beauty of Connotation in Transferred Epithet

Vagueness and connotation are defects for science, but they possess unique charm in works of literature. To some extent, the transferred epithet provides a vague and hidden image to artworks. It puts a clear image of the outside world into the fog of emotion. That is to put words together which are of different categories and should not be put together in a common condition. So a vague concept is portrayed that cannot directly conform to the real world. For example, “he was left outside in the pitiless cold”. “Pitiless” is usually employed to describe those who lack sympathy while it is used to modify “cold”, the weather, here. The meaning of the sentence is made to be vague in this way. As a matter of fact, Pitiless is affiliated with the man who left him outside. All in all, transferred epithet in the text leaves room for readers to imagine and embodies the beauty of connotation in literary works.

3.3.4 The Beauty of Conciseness in Transferred Epithet

Arts pursue conciseness and connotation rather than redundancy and transparency. In literary works, if a scene or some feelings can be expressed by a word or a phrase, it usually won't be enlarged into a sentence. Moreover, transferred epithet often put words of different categories together in an economical way to form unusual language units. Words of different categories are put together in a language unit by the transferred epithet, which contains as much information as they can. An example is shown here, "he is an easy writer". This sentence can be paraphrased as "he is a writer whose works are easy to understand". But as we can see, many words are saved because of the use of the transferred epithet, which is the typical example of the beauty of conciseness.

3.3.5 The Beauty of Absurdity in Transferred Epithet

Absurdity is a significant category of aesthetic forms. Bergson (1980) once noted, "Absurd language can be created by inserting ridiculous concepts in the stereotyped expression". He also argued, "Ridiculousness is not the root of absurdity but the most simple and effective tool" (Bergson, 1980). Thus, in-text featured by transferred epithet some ridiculous collocations can be seen, and actually, they are useful to express absurdity. Here is an example, "he tossed on the troubled pillow". In a common situation, "troubled" would not be used to modify "a pillow" because "troubled" means restless which can be employed to modify humans. It is the usage of transferred epithet that makes it possible to create the beauty of absurdity. In the example, it seems ridiculous to collocate "troubled" with the "pillow". In fact, it works well to produce the beauty of absurdity for the text.

4. The Translation Strategies of Transferred Epithet from English to Chinese

Theodore Horace Savory, a British translation theorist, considers translation is an art. One cannot operate in the way of "X=Y" when a translator is translating. The accumulation of different cultures and history contribute to a lot of unique fixed expressive methods, which leaves many barriers to translators. It is widely acknowledged that the main purpose of translation is to remove those hindrances that exist between writers and readers because of different languages. (Liao, 2001). A vital phenomenon should not be ignored that there exist a number of similarities between transferred epithet in English culture and Yijiu in Chinese culture, whether about definitions or manifestation modes or effect of expression. Does that mean transferred epithet in English culture can be changed into Yijiu in Chinese culture in a literal way? Obviously, the answer is no. As far as I am concerned, the purpose of the translation of transferred epithet should also follow the rules as the general translation does—to illustrate the meaning of the text and to make it understandable to readers, which requests translators to comprehend original text first. Nevertheless, translators must notice the identities of transferred epithet. For one thing, the same transferred modifier could have a different meaning, and the information and attitude of writers may differ in various collocations or contexts. For another, the transferred epithet is concise, implicit, and profound and on most occasions, the meaning and attitude lay in context but sometimes do not, so it is not certain. In summary, translators, at the beginning, need to comprehend original text featured by transferred epithet, which is basic for translation; then, translators should have a good command of Chinese characteristics; finally, translators need to employ the most proper words to clarify the meaning of original text and to convey it to readers. Only in this way can the text of translation arouse readers' empathy with the novel and vivid effect of transferred epithet while they understand them.

4.1 The Principles of Translation

4.1.1 Transmitting the Information of ST

The fundamental function of language is to transmit the information. And information can be conveyed in various ways. Some information is literal while some are buried in lines. Confronting much information in different layers, a translator should transmit information in the source language as much as he can when he is translating. If the form and the information of source language cannot be maintained at the same time, one must be chosen while the other must be abandoned. Some text featured by transferred epithet is easy to understand so it can be translated indirectly literal way while some are difficult to comprehend with hidden information, so translators, first, need to probe into the profound information of original text and, then, translate it in the way that target readers can accept it easily. The translation should maintain the characteristics, especially the aesthetic characteristics, of a transferred epithet as long as target readers can comprehend and accept it because, in most conditions, the transferred epithet is employed in literature like poetry, prose, novels, etc, which pursues the beauty of arts. For instance, miserable wrinkles, jubilant bonfire, careless mistakes are usually translated in a

literal way, of which the translation is “悲惨的皱纹”, “欢乐的篝火”, “粗心的错误” respectively because there is an equivalent expression in Chinese. Some text featured by transferred epithet cannot be translated to equivalent expression so translators need to find other approaches to present the message of original text regardless of the figure of speech-transferred epithet. An example is shown here, “let me admitted that it isn’t easy to resist cracking all those nut jokes. But resist I will. You’ll get no cheap laughs from this article”.

“Cheap” and “laugh” is a temporary collocation in English because laugh can not be measured by money. “Cheap laugh” in the context means someone can get fun without careful thinking. If it is translated by the way of literal translation, it can not be accepted by target readers because of a lack of obvious logic. In order to convey the message of the source language, it is necessary for translators to take the context into consideration and change the structure of the sentence. This sentence can be translated as“我得承认人们是很难抗拒破译所有那些难懂的笑料的。但我会竭力抗拒。不动脑子,你将无法感受到该文章中引人发笑之处”.

4.1.2 Delivering the Aesthetic Value of ST

From the aspect of art aesthetics, translating is the process of art reproduction. Beauty exists everywhere and language in different layers has its unique aesthetic value. Particularly in literary works where transferred epithet often appears, the aesthetic value of language is remarkable. Hence, translators should conform to the rules of art reproduction and ponder on the author’s purpose of aesthetics or rhetoric so that it is possible for translation to represent the aesthetic function of the original text and to have equal effective expression as source language does. The transferred epithet is usually based on inner emotion, which is the natural reveal of emotion, so translators should think out the deep meaning of text featured by transferred epithet from the point of aesthetics and present authors’ psychological images as possible as they can. For example, “but there were the cold, closed, unfriendly houses”. “Cold” in the context means not enthusiastic, and it with unfriendly modifies humans here, but the two words collocate with houses. If it is translated to “.....那些房子的门窗, 冷漠无情, 满是敌意”, it doesn't seem vivid and attractive. It is better to translate it into “.....那些房子全是门窗紧闭, 人们冷漠无情, 一点也不友善”, which is more fluent and can reveal the psychology of the author better.

4.1.3 Reconstructing the Cultural Images of ST

Literary translation is a contest between two languages and cultures, also an art. The trump card in this contest is to take advantage of the target language, in other words, to reinvent(Xu,2000). The quality of the translation of text featured by transferred epithet depends on the advantage of Chinese that translators can make use of and on the conformity with the aesthetic taste of target readers. Four-character phrases are the scream of Chinese, which also have the features of conciseness and vividness as transferred epithet does. With the usage of four-character Chinese phrases, translation can not only be vivid, but also have excellent forms, and cohesion. As a result, translation can be more wildly accepted by the readers and the cultural restructuring can be realized. For instance, “a dizzy height” can be translated into “高得令人头晕目眩”, “dumb anger” can be translated into “气得哑口无言”.

4.2 The Methods of the Translation of Transferred Epithet

In the field of translation, literal translation and free translation are two basic methods. There exist differences as well as similarities between ST and target text (TT), so literal translation and free translations have their respective strengths and weaknesses for various texts. Normally, a literal translation is preferentially chosen because it conforms to the model, the content and the style of the original text. However, in the cases of text featured by transferred epithet, free translation has a more important position than literal translation in the process of translating it from English to Chinese because the thinking ways of people with English as their mother tongue and of Chinese are quite different, and this rhetorical expression need translating in ways target readers can accept. Free translation focuses on the core of ST, and pursues the fluency of TT rather than keep the entirety of the original text. All in all, literal translation and free translation are available to the translation of text featured by transferred epithet from English to Chinese.

4.2.1 Literal Translation

As an advocator of literal translation, Lu Xu believes that liberal translation means faithfulness and expressiveness, which must include two aspects:1)easy to comprehend; 2) to retain the manner of

ST. The rhetoric transferred epithet exists in English as well as in Chinese which is called yijiu. Though the two have some differences, they have similarities in pragmatic functions, rhetorical characteristics, and modes, which make it possible to translate English transferred epithet to Chinese by a literal translation. In such conditions as a similar expression of transferred epithet, literal translation can be employed. Quantities of translators have English transferred-epithet text translated into Chinese version naturally by this means. For example,

Source text:

(1) I said with a mysterious wink and closed my bag and left. (2) A nervous silence was followed by a nervous laugh. (3) Beautiful there at any time, seemed that afternoon to wear an extreme and pathetic beauty.

Target text:

(1) 我说那话时带着神秘的眼色，并把书包扣好，然后离开了。(2) 先是一阵局促不安的沉默，再是一阵局促不安的干笑。(3) 这里景物一向是美的，这天下午却呈现出一种极致的美，招人怜悯的美。

The above TT is translated by the means of literal translation, which realizes the equivalent of forms and functions and retains the conciseness and connotation. It can be said that TT keeps the structural, semantic, aesthetic characteristics and rhetorical effect of ST and transmits the information of it in the way of a literal translation.

4.2.2 Free Translation

Sometimes English transferred epithet does not have the equivalent in Chinese due to the differences in language structure, styles, history and cultures between them. Hence, translators should adopt the strategy of free translation rather than literal translation or modeling application to translate English transferred epithet to Chinese. In *Dictionary of Translation Studies*, free translation is defined as a type of translation in which more attention is paid to producing a natural target language than to preserving the source language wording intact (Shuttleworth & Cowie, 2004). The nature of transferred epithet is temporary collocation in semantics, so context is indispensable for the transferred modifier. In conclusion, translators, firstly, should grasp the logical connections and the deep meaning of English transferred epithet; secondly, the useful information of ST should be retained; finally, the translation should reflect the effect of a transferred epithet as possible as it can. A free translation is dynamic, which does mean no rules or skills can be found about it. In fact, the methods of logical replacement, separate translation, adverbializing, fusing, changing structure, adding words and using four-character Chinese phrases are effective techniques.

Logical replacement is the first one. Logical replacement is the product of human common thinking modes. The main characteristic of the transferred epithet is the transference of epithet, which means a modifier and the logical modified word are isolated (Wang, 2000). Sometimes, the Chinese-version translation of English transferred epithet by literal translation does not agree with Chinese expressive regulations, so the translation is not so acceptable. In this condition, the transferred modifier can be moved to the place where it should be according to logic. Here are examples,

Source text:

(1) An idea that held a wild chance came to him. (2) I enjoy the clean voluptuousness of the warm breeze on my skin and the cool support of the water. (V. Sackville, *West: No Signposts in the Sea*) (3) The plowman homeward plods his weary way. (Thomas Gray: *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*)

Target text:

(1) 一个碰碰运气的大胆想法浮现在他心头。(2) 我享受着暖风吹到皮肤上的清爽快感以及清凉池水对我身体的浮托。(3) 疲倦的农夫荷锄归家。

In the three examples, “wild”, “cool” and “weary” respectively modify “a chance”, “the support” and “his way” grammatically, but they modify “an idea”, “water” and “the plowman” respectively logically. However, in the translation of the three sentences, “wild”, “cool” and “weary” collocate with “an idea”, “water” and “the plowman” both grammatically and logically. That is to say, the transferred modifiers in the ST are put back to its logical position in the TT. With the method of the logical replacement being employed, the logic of translation is clear so that target readers accept it easily.

Definitely, only when the transferred modifiers, the grammatically modified part, and the logically modified part are all showed in source language can the method of logical replacement be used. The relationships between the three can be presented in the following figure (see Figure 1).

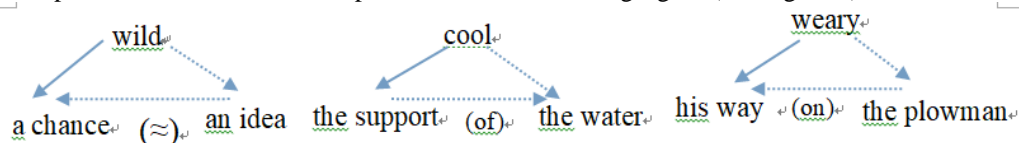


Figure 1: Relationships between the three parts

The method of separate translation is the second one. Sometimes, information can be contained in a simple phrase featured by the transferred epithet, which violates regular collocations, but it cannot be expressed clearly in a clause in the translation. On such occasions, the method of separate translation can be adopted. Transferred modifiers can be separated from central words and be translated separately. Here are examples,

Source text:

(1) There was an amazing silence. (2) I had no temptation to take a flying holiday to the south. (3) The doctor's face expressed a kind of doubting admiration.

Target text:

(1) 人们惊愕不已，一时间寂静无声。(2) 我不想乘飞机去南方度假。(3) 医生的脸上流露出钦佩而又带有疑惑的神情。

In the first example, “amazed” is transferred to modify “silence”, and this sentence can be paraphrased as people there were amazed and fell into silence. In order to present the logic of the text and make it more acceptable, the translator translates the two parts separately. In the second example, “flying” modifies “holiday” grammatically, and the sentence can be paraphrased as I had no temptation to take the flight to have a holiday in the south. “Flying” and “a holiday” are translated as two relative independent language units. “Doubting admiration” is a compressed effective expression in the third example, whose deep structure consists of two parts: the doctor’s facial expression has doubts; the doctor’s facial expression is admiring. Owing to the method of separate translation, the Chinese translation of the three texts is logical and understandable for target readers.

Adverbializing is the third translation tact. The deep logic relationships of transferred modifiers and the modified are indirect, and transferred modifiers don’t mean the characteristics or the nature of the modified. There exist other relationships between them, and one of the most possible relationships is that transferred modifiers are the adverbials of parts of the sentences. Besides, sometimes transferred modifiers modify a whole sentence rather than one element. In such conditions, transferred modifiers act as adverbials. For the former, translators need to figure out the structure of text firstly, namely which kinds of adverbials transferred modifiers are in text: adverbials showing the time, or places, or manner, or reasons, or conditions, or results, or concession. After that, it must be decided that where transferred modifiers should be placed in translation. For the latter, transferred modifiers should be separated from the modified as the adverbials of sentences. For instance,

Source text:

(1)He occasionally even engages in electronic conversations with Apple users around the country (an adverbial of manner). (2) Two of the largest and most powerful nations of the world have since 1950 lived in isolated ignorance of one another and mutual fear and hate (an adverbial of reason). (3) People listened with open-mouthed astonishment while the shocking news sank in (an adverbial of result). (4)They represent a pitiful remnant of a group that once included some 30 kinds of animals large enough to make the ground tremble beneath their step.

Target text:

(1) 他甚至偶尔跟全国苹果电脑用户通过电脑进行交谈。(2) 自 1950 年以来，世界上面积最大、实力最强的国家中的两个，由于相互隔离而彼此毫无了解，处于相互恐惧和敌视之中。(3) 当这条令人震惊的消息传来时，人们听后都惊得目瞪口呆。(4) 曾有约三十种不同的象。这些象身躯非常庞大，它们行走时使得足下的大地震动。令人遗憾的是，只有非洲象和印度象存活下来(Wang, 2000)。

Fusing is the fourth method. The method of fusing is to break the bind of Chinese and to translate English text into Chinese in a flexible way. Expression featured by transferred epithet is very flexible and craft. Only when it is placed into a whole sentence, its deep meaning can be gotten. In order to convey underlying meaning, the ST needs to comprehend fully and fusing as a whole(Wang, 2008). For example,

Source text:

(1)A dirty yellow sky had threatened rain all day and a hollow stillness hung over the valley. (2) Occasionally he would pack up a box for Antonapoulous, but he never received any reply. And so the months passed in this empty, dreaming way.

Target text:

(1) 那天天色昏暗,整天像要下雨的样子,空荡荡的山谷一片寂静。(2)有时他会包好一盒礼物给 Antonapoulou 寄去,却从来没有收到任何回音,就是在这种空虚与梦幻的交织中,几个月过去了。

Changing Structure is the fifth one. Transferred epithet is usually an attributive structure. If it translated into Chinese, the translation would violate regulations. In this condition, it is appropriate to change the attributive structure to a thematic structure. Here is an example, “an expensive failure can be made into an asset if you are learned from it, but Monsanto still has some learning to do”. The TT is “失败的代价虽然昂贵,但是只要你能从中吸取教训,它也能化为一笔财富。不过,蔓山托公司仍然需要总结教训”。

Translators must grasp the inner logical relationship—the tendency of meaning change between the theme and the rheme—of the first clause in the sentence before translating. Then the subject—an expensive failure—should be changed into a theme-rheme clause. As a result, the main sentence is enlarged into a compound sentence. Furthermore, whether in attributive structure or in theme-rheme structure, a “failure” can not collocate with “expensive”. Translators need to use the method of adding words which will be discussed in the following text to make the translation acceptable.

Adding words is the sixth one. A quantity of English text featured by transferred epithet cannot be translated into Chinese by literal translation because of the differences in thinking modes and expression ways, so in the process of translating, words, phrases, even clauses need be added according to contexts to express integral meaning. For example,

Source text:

(1)My finger lingered almost unconsciously on the familiar leaves and blossoms which had just come forth to greet the sweet southern spring. (2)His supervisor was probably already pacing up and down with dismissal speech rehearsed. (3) The clerk made a paralytic attempt to stand at attention.

Target text:

(1) 我的手几乎是无意识地抚摸着我所熟悉的叶片和花朵,这新长的叶片和刚开的花朵迎来了南国芬芳的春天。(2) 他的上司大概在一边踱步,一边构思着解雇他的言辞。(3) 文书努力使自己立正站好,手脚好像不听使唤了一样。

In order to make the translation of the first example clear, the familiar leaves and blossoms are translated into “我所熟悉的树叶和花朵”, in which“我” is added; In the second example, dismissal speech is translated into “解雇他的言辞” so that the translation is more reasonable. What’s more, in the third example, “paralytic” is translated into a clause. From the above, it can be concluded that the method of adding words doesn’t mean adding words at random but to add proper words according to context to make the meaning of sentences integral.

Employing Chinese four-character phrases is the last one. The quality of translation relies on a number of factors, and one of the most important factors is to make the best use of the advantages of translation language. Some Chinese expression has a unique strength. A typical example is four-character phrases, which are concise, vivid, and symmetrical. If four-character phrases can be employed properly in translation, the translation text must be attractive because of authentic expression.

Text featured by transferred epithet can be translated by the method of employing four-character phrases with the premise of being in line with ST (Zhong & Li, 2005). Here are examples,

Source text:

(1) Franklin Roosevelt listened with bright-eyed smiling attention, saying nothing, and applauding heartily with the rest. (2) He tossed himself about on a sleepless bed in pain all night long. (3) I was surprised to find him living in such drab and cheerless surroundings (Fan, 1992).

Target text:

(1) 富兰克林·罗斯福目光炯炯,满面笑容,聚精会神地听着,什么也不说,只是由衷地同其他人一道热烈地鼓掌喝彩。(2)他彻夜痛苦地在床上辗转反侧,难以入眠。(3)我十分意外地发现他生活的环境单调,而他也落落寡欢。

To some extent, translation is profound, which comes from the practice of translating and service for it. What is stated above aims at the translation of English transferred epithet to Chinese, and it has the guiding significance for the translation. In the progress of translating, more than one approach is adopted at the same time depending on circumstances to transmitting the information, the aesthetic value and cultural images of ST.

5. Conclusion

Through the analysis above, it is concluded that the transferred epithet is a figure of speech in which the epithet is transferred from the appropriate noun to modify another to which it doesn't really belong. It seems superficially illogical but grammatical. Indeed, there exist underlying logical relationships between transferred modifiers and central words. It is the premise and foundation to tell apart transferred epithet from other figures of speech and to comprehend it.

Characteristics of transferred epithet are also discussed in this paper, which include the structure characteristics, the semantic characteristics, and the aesthetic characteristics. The structure characteristics are various: adjective/ present participle/ past participle + central word (a noun), central word (a noun) + of + modifier (a noun), and central word (a noun) + adjective (object compliment). As for the semantic characteristics, the contradictoriness, the temporality, and the deviation are analyzed. And the beauty of color, novelty, connotation, conciseness, and absurdity in transferred epithet contribute to the aesthetic value of it. Furthermore, the principles and methods of translation are discussed. The principles are transmitting the information, the aesthetic, and reconstructing the cultural images of ST. Besides, literal translation and free translation are two main categories of translation tact. Free translation consists of many specific skills, such as the method of logical replacement, separate translation, adverbializing, fusing, changing structure, adding words, and employing Chinese four-character phrases. To summarize, this paper has revealed the characteristics of English transferred epithet and the translation principles and methods are studied.

In this paper, only the characteristics and translation of transferred epithet are analyzed. Therefore, further studies in this field can be investigated. Firstly, the cognitive foundation of transferred epithet can be dug into, which reveals the inner psychological mechanism to generate it. Secondly, the usage of the transferred epithet in spoken language has a large room to cultivate. Thirdly, the comparative studies of English transferred epithet and Chinese transferred epithet is a promising field, which is meaningful for the communication and interaction of the two cultures.

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