



A Comparative Research of the English Translation of *Hurry* from the Perspective of Translation Aesthetics

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Type of Work: Peer Reviewed.


DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.21013/jems.v20.n3.p5>

Review history: Submitted: June 15, 2024; Revised: July 29, 2024; Accepted: August 21, 2024

How to cite this paper:

Zhang, J. & Ye, J. (2024). A Comparative Research of the English Translation of *Hurry* from the Perspective of Translation Aesthetics. *IRA-International Journal of Education & Multidisciplinary Studies* (ISSN 2455-2526), 20(3), 212-219. <https://dx.doi.org/10.21013/jems.v20.n3.p5>

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This paper is peer-reviewed following IRA Academico Research's [Peer Review Program](#) .

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ABSTRACT

As one of the significant representatives of modern Chinese prose, Zhu Ziqing's "Hurry" is renowned for its profound reflection and delicate description. This research, from the perspective of translation aesthetics, conducts a comparative analysis of the English translations of Zhu Ziqing's prose "Hurry" by Zhu Chunshen, Zhang Peiji, and Howard Goldblatt. By comparing the differences among the three translators in terms of language processing, cultural transformation and transmission, as well as reader orientation and acceptance in translation, this research explores the influence of different translation aesthetic concepts on the translated texts. The results indicate that Zhu Chunshen's translation emphasizes fidelity to the original language style and artistic conception, Zhang Peiji's translation excels in fluency and naturalness, catering more to the taste of contemporary English readers, while Howard Goldblatt's translation is more precise and accurate in language expression, also retaining the original emotion and meaning, with a focus on the phonetic beauty and imagery of language. This research provides valuable insights into the application of translation aesthetics and translation practice.

Keywords: Translation Aesthetics; Comparative Research; Hurry

1 Theoretical Framework of Translation Aesthetics

1.1 Overview of Translation Aesthetics Theory

Translation aesthetics is a discipline that explores the relationship between translation and aesthetics, aiming to investigate the aesthetic characteristics inherent in translation as an art form (Jiangping, 2013). The concept of translation aesthetics encompasses the aesthetic value of translation and its aesthetic principles. The development history of translation aesthetics can be traced back to ancient times. In 1750, the German classical philosopher Baumgarten published his work "Aesthetics," marking the gradual emergence of "aesthetics" as an independent discipline. In ancient Greece, translation was regarded as an art form. Aristotle mentioned the aesthetic issues of translation in his work "Poetics," suggesting that translation should strive for fidelity to the original work while also paying attention to the beauty of language (Lin, 2018). During the Middle Ages, translation aesthetics was influenced by religion and theology, as translation was seen as a means of disseminating sacred information. With the advent of the Renaissance, translation aesthetics began to receive more attention. People began to realize that translation was not only a means of conveying information but also a creative artistic form (Jianjun et al., 2020). During this period, translators began to emphasize the beauty of language and literary style, striving to preserve the aesthetic characteristics of the original works in the translation process (Mei, 2014).

The translation aesthetics theory in China has undergone a long process of development (Xingying, 2018). Throughout this process, works such as Qian Guanlian's "Aesthetic Linguistics," Fu Zhongxuan's "Practical Translation Aesthetics," and Mao Ronggui's "Translation Aesthetics" have all made significant contributions to the advancement of this theory (Chunying & Hongwei, 2016). However, Liu Miqing is regarded as the culmination of translation aesthetics theory, as he

systematized the theory based on previous research (Yao & Pengpeng, 2016). Liu Miqing's contribution lies in his in-depth interpretation of the scientific and artistic aspects of translation. He believed that translation is both a science, requiring adherence to certain rules and principles, and an art, necessitating translators to possess creativity and aesthetic ability. His research not only focused on the technical aspects of translation but also on the relationship between the aesthetic subject and object in translation activities. Furthermore, he delved into the issues of aesthetic ideals and aesthetic representation in translation. He argued that translation aesthetic ideals are the translator's pursuit and expectations of the translated work, while aesthetic representation is how translators reproduce the aesthetic effects of the original work in the actual translation process. He emphasized that translators need to respect the original work and, through the use of various translation techniques and strategies, ensure that the translated text achieves an aesthetic effect comparable to that of the original work (Yunlong & Gang, 2018).

1.2 The Application of Translation Aesthetics Theory

The retrieval of journal articles from the past three decades on CNKI informs us that research combining translation and aesthetics primarily includes studies on "aesthetic theories, values, and case analyses in literary translation," "aesthetic studies in non-literary translation," and so on. These studies encompass discussions at the textual level, analyzing elements such as sound, words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, and sections, covering factors related to the cognition of aesthetic subjects and objects, culture, society, aesthetic consciousness, aesthetic representation, and more in translation aesthetics. Among them are studies combining literary translation with aesthetics, such as "Aesthetic Linguistics in Chinese-English Literary Translation: A Review of 'Literary Translation and Linguistic Aesthetics' (Xin & Xi, 2022)", "Aesthetic Perspective on Literary Translation Art: A Review of 'The Art of Translation' (Wenqian, 2020)", "Study on the Language of Literary Translation from an Aesthetic Perspective" (Junru, 2012), and so forth. There are also studies analyzing translated works from the perspective of translation aesthetics, such as "Expressive Art of the English Translation of 'Home' from an Aesthetic Perspective (Hai, 2015)" and "Aesthetic Representation of the Translation of 'Dream of the Red Chamber' from the Perspective of Translation Aesthetics (Hua, 2011)". Integration with the philosophy of translation thought is also evident, with research analyzing the holistic consciousness, dialogue consciousness, dialectical consciousness, and innovative consciousness reflected in translation thoughts. For example, "Harmony and Transcendence: An Analysis of the Aesthetic Traits of Zhang Bairan's Translation Philosophy (Hongjuan, 2022)", among others.

2. The Comparative Research of the English Translations of Hurry

The prose work "Hurry" by Zhu Ziqing is renowned for its profound reflections and delicate descriptions (Junjie, 2013). With the development of globalization, Zhu Ziqing's works have also begun to be translated into other languages, with English translations being particularly significant. In order to better understand the art and techniques of translation, as well as the differences and

characteristics of various translators in conveying the original meaning and style (Qun, 2016), this paper conducts comparative research of several excerpts from Zhu Ziqing's prose "Hurry" translated by Zhu Chunshen, Zhang Peiji, and Howard Goldblatt, analyzing their strategies and effects in translation from the perspective of translation aesthetics. Zhu Chunshen's translation "Hasty as a Flash" was published in 1959, Zhang Peiji's translation "Hasty" was published in 1981, and Howard Goldblatt's translation "Hasty as a Flash" was published in 2003.

2.1 Language Processing

From the perspective of translation aesthetics, these three translations exhibit some differences in expression, language style, and rhetorical devices. Zhu Chunshen employs a more formal language style, using some complex sentence structures and vocabulary, such as "there is a time of return," "died back," and "regreening." This language style evokes a sense of solemnity and thoughtful consideration, while also adding a touch of poetry and artistry. In terms of rhetorical devices, Zhu Chunshen's translation employs rhetorical questions and parallelism, for example: "Swallows may have gone, but there is a time of return; willow trees may have died back, but there is a time of regreening; peach blossoms may have fallen, but they will bloom again." This use of rhetorical devices makes the sentences more vivid and powerful, evoking strong emotions.

In terms of language style, Zhang Peiji's translation is relatively concise and straightforward, employing simple sentence structures and commonly used vocabulary, such as "go away," "wither," and "shed their blossoms." This language style gives a direct and concise impression while also being closer to colloquial expression. In the realm of rhetorical devices, Zhang Peiji's translation utilizes hypothetical and interrogative sentences, such as "Perhaps they have been stolen by someone. But who could it be and where could he hide them?" These rhetorical devices imbue the sentences with greater emotion and expressiveness.

Howard Goldblatt's translation strikes a balance between the styles of Zhu Chunshen and Zhang Peiji. It incorporates both formal vocabulary and sentence structures, as well as clear and concise expressions. In terms of rhetorical devices, Goldblatt employs rhetorical questions and parallelism, as seen in the passage: "You who are wiser than I, tell me, then: why is it that the days, once gone, never again return? Are they stolen by someone? Then, by whom? And where are they hidden? Or do they run away by themselves? Then, where are they now?" These rhetorical devices render the sentences more powerful and thought-provoking.

For example, in emphasizing that the departure of swallows, willows, and peach blossoms is only temporary, and that they will return. Zhu Chunshen's translation is relatively direct in expression, using phrases such as "may have gone," "may have died back," and "may have fallen" to indicate possibility. Zhang Peiji's translation flows more smoothly in expression, employing conditional clauses introduced by "if" to convey possibility. Howard Goldblatt's translation, on the other hand, is more lyrical in expression, utilizing phrases like "may go," "may wither," and "may fade and fall" to indicate possibility.

When questioning why days never return once they have passed, implying that the reason for their departure might be theft or their own escape, Zhu Chunshen's translation uses conditional sentences such as "if they had been stolen" and "if they had made the escape." Zhang Peiji's translation employs expressions like "perhaps they have been stolen" and "perhaps they have just run away," conveying a smoother and more flexible language overall. Howard Goldblatt's translation uses expressions like "are they stolen" and "do they run away," presenting a more lyrical and elegant language overall.

In summary, these three translations exhibit some differences in language style and rhetorical devices. Zhu Chunshen's version is more formal and solemn, employing complex sentence structures and vocabulary, giving a sense of thoughtful consideration. Zhang Peiji's rendition is relatively fluent and natural, closer to colloquial expressions, rich in emotion and expressiveness. Howard Goldblatt's translation falls between Zhu Chunshen and Zhang Peiji, incorporating both formal vocabulary and sentence structures as well as some concise and clear expressions. Rhetorical devices such as rhetorical questions and parallelism are used, making the sentences more powerful and thought-provoking.

2.2 Cultural Transformation and Communication

From the perspective of cultural transformation and communication, the above three translations can be compared and analyzed. Zhu Chunshen's translation adopts a more direct style of expression, using straightforward sentence structures and vocabulary such as "bustling world," "hesitate," and "rushing," making the language style of the translation more concise and clearer. Zhang Peiji's translation, on the other hand, employs a more literary expression, using phrases like "teeming millions" and "waver and wader," enhancing the elegance of the language style. Howard Goldblatt's translation, meanwhile, focuses more on balance and fluency in expression, with phrases like "pace irresolutely" and "hurry along," creating a smoother language style.

Furthermore, Zhu Chunshen's translation conveys cultural connotations more directly through expressions like "eight-thousand-day rush" and "dispersed as smoke." Zhang Peiji's translation, on the other hand, uses phrases like "wisps of smoke" and "thin mists" to convey the sense of time passing without a trace from the original text. These phrases imply the elusive and intangible nature of time, giving readers a sense of time passing like smoke or mist. This expression is more abstract and metaphorical, evoking a dreamlike feeling. Howard Goldblatt's translation, however, uses phrases like "irresolute wanderings" and "burned off under the onslaught of the morning sun," which are more concrete and vivid, describing the lingering of time and the scene of being worn away by the morning sun. This expression is more direct and specific, giving readers a sense of reality and clarity.

In the example, Zhu Chunshen's translation uses the expression "It is not fair though," emphasizing the author's contemplation and questioning of their own existence and significance. Zhang Peiji's translation, on the other hand, employs "I am taking it very much to heart,"

emphasizing the author's reflection and concern regarding their existence and meaning. Howard Goldblatt's translation uses "But what I cannot accept this," emphasizing the author's contemplation and dissatisfaction with their own existence and significance.

In conclusion, from the perspective of translation aesthetics, it can be observed that these three translations exhibit differences in expression, language style, and cultural connotations. Each translation possesses its unique characteristics and advantages. When translating, translators need to consider the characteristics of the original text and choose appropriate expression styles and language tones to convey the cultural connotations and emotions of the original text.

2.3 Reader Orientation and Acceptance of Translation

Zhu Chunshen's translation renders the original text "日子如轻烟，被微风吹散了，如薄雾，被初阳蒸融了" as "Those bygone days have been dispersed as smoke by a light wind, or evaporated as mist by the morning sun," which closely captures the original meaning while retaining the imagery and symbolism. This translation approach prioritizes the restoration of the original poetic imagery, enabling readers to more intuitively grasp the emotions and significance conveyed in the original text.

In Zhang Peiji's translation, the phrase "我留着些什么痕迹呢？" is rendered as "What traces have I left behind me?" which accurately conveys the meaning of the original text. Furthermore, in translating "我何曾留着像游丝样的痕迹呢？" as "Have I ever left behind any gossamer traces at all?" the term "gossamer traces" vividly captures the essence of "像游丝样的痕迹" in the original text, offering a more evocative expression that effectively communicates the imagery present in the original text.

In Howard Goldblatt's translation, the phrase "在八千多日的匆匆里，除徘徊外，又剩些什么呢？" is translated as "In these more than 8,000 days of hurrying, what have I to show but some irresolute wanderings?" This accurately conveys the meaning of the original text. Additionally, in translating "我赤裸裸来到这世界，转眼间也将赤裸裸地回去罢？" as "Naked I came into this world, and in a twinkling still naked I will leave it," Goldblatt utilizes a more direct translation approach, effectively conveying the emotions and significance present in the original text.

In summary, Zhu Chunshen's translation prioritizes the restoration of the original poetic imagery, allowing readers to more intuitively grasp the emotions and significance conveyed in the original text. Zhang Peiji's translation focuses on accurately conveying the meaning of the original text, enabling readers to understand the original meaning more clearly. Howard Goldblatt's translation allows readers to directly experience the emotions and significance of the original text. Different translation approaches cater to the diverse needs of readers, providing a variety of reading experiences.

3. Conclusion

3.1 Characteristics of Different Translations

Zhu Ziqing's prose "Hurry" is a classic work of modern Chinese prose and has been widely translated into English. From the perspective of translation aesthetics, we can summarize some characteristics from the translations of three translators: Zhu Chunshen, Zhang Peiji, and Howard Goldblatt. Zhu Chunshen's translation style is relatively traditional, focusing on fidelity to the original language style and imagery. While preserving the emotions and meanings of the original text, his translation also retains Zhu Ziqing's unique narrative style and rhythm. Zhang Peiji's translation style is relatively more liberal and flexible compared to Zhu Chunshen. He emphasizes incorporating contemporary English expressions into the translation, giving the text a more modern feel. Zhang Peiji's translation excels in fluency and naturalness of language, catering more to the taste of contemporary English readers. Goldblatt, a renowned translator of Chinese literature, is characterized by his fidelity to the original text and accurate conveyance of its imagery. His translation is more precise and accurate in linguistic expression, while also preserving the emotions and meanings of Zhu Ziqing's original work.

3.2 The Influence of Translation Aesthetics on Translated Texts

Aesthetics exert significant influence on the language selection and expressive manner of translators. Aesthetics accentuate the pursuit and expression of beauty, thus translators pay heed to preserving the aesthetic appeal and ambiance of the original work when choosing vocabulary and sentence structures. Zhu Chunshen prioritizes the use of concise yet elegant language, enabling the English rendition to convey the emotions and meanings of the original work. Conversely, Zhang Peiji focuses on employing language rich in rhythm, endowing the English translation with poetic and musical qualities. Simultaneously, aesthetics influence the creativity and innovation of translators. Emphasizing the creation and innovation of beauty, translators focus on reinterpreting and recreating the original work. Zhu Chunshen, in particular, emphasizes reinterpreting the emotions and meanings of the original, imbuing the English translation with personal style and creativity. Zhang Peiji, on the other hand, prioritizes innovating the language and form of the original work, resulting in an English translation with unique artistic and innovative qualities. Howard Goldblatt, meanwhile, concentrates on adjusting and altering the structure and rhythm of the original, infusing the English translation with dramatic tension and intensity.

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