

A Comparative Study on the Translation of Character Discourse of Fool in *King Lear* - Taking Liang Shiqiu's and Zhu Shenghao's Translations as an Example

Sirui Li

Jiangxi University of Technology, Nanchang, Jiangxi, China

Abstract: *King Lear* is one of the four great tragedies written by William Shakespeare, a famous English dramatist and poet in the Renaissance. It is widely regarded as "the greatest play of Shakespeare and the best of his work". As one of the important and indispensable roles in *King Lear*, the "Fool" is a clown that appears the most frequently and speaks the most abundant content of all clown characters in the four major tragedies. Though his words are not as many as the contents number of the leading roles in the work, his language features, image and influence are prominent and significant. In the middle of the 19th century, Shakespeare's works came to China along with the western missionaries and were widely spread in China. And translators in different periods translated Shakespeare's works based on different historical backgrounds and their own translation styles. Among many famous translators of Shakespeare's work, Liang Shiqiu and Zhu Shenghao are prominent. Their translations have strong characteristics and representativeness. Liang Shiqiu adhered to the principle of "worship the truth" and respected the original text as much as possible. He mainly adopted the translation strategy of foreignization and wrote in vernacular prose, which was very beautiful and refined. Zhu Shenghao, on the other hand, upheld the theory of "seize the spirit". He paid attention to readers' feelings and mainly used domestication translation method with large number of words with Chinese characteristics. Thus, his translation is very idiomatic and vivid. From the perspective of Skopos theory, this paper will make a comparative analysis of the language characteristics of "Fool" in Liang Shiqiu's and Zhu Shenghao's translation work, the translation strategies they used and text effects of their works, so as to explore the influence of Skopos theory on translators' translation and the solutions of translation problems.

Keywords: *King Lear*, Skopos theory, Liang Shiqiu, Zhu Shenghao, Translation strategies.

1. Introduction

Shakespeare is the premier representative of European Renaissance literature, and his dramatic characters are vivid and varied, each with their own style. And *King Lear*, as one of the most outstanding writings of the four great tragedies by Shakespeare, is favored by the majority of scholars and readers. In the play, the clown around King Lear, Fool, as a close confidant of the king, is one of the few sober and intelligent people in the play. His words are mostly catchy jingles, vulgar but containing truth and full of deep meaning.

Since the introduction of Shakespeare's works into China, countless translators have left their excellent translations of Shakespeare for the world's scholars to appreciate and study. Among them, Liang Shiqiu and Zhu Shenghao can be regarded as the outstanding representatives of the translation of *King Lear*. Their versions are widely circulated in China, and more and more scholars have begun to compare and study their translations, so as to understand their own distinctive styles and have a more comprehensive understanding of Shakespeare's works.

At present, most of the domestic studies on the translation of *King Lear* focus on analyzing the linguistic characteristics of the translators' versions from the perspectives of pragmatics and translation poetics, so as to understand the translation styles of translators. For example, Chen (2016) analyzes the works of Fang Ping and Zhu Shenghao from the perspectives of translators' ideology and handling method. From the perspective of pragmatics, the translation methods of different versions reflect different structures, which depends on the

background of the times in which the translators live and the cultural background of the readers. Deng (2012) analyzes Liang Shiqiu's and Zhu Shenghao's translations of *King Lear* based on Lefevre's Manipulation Theory, discussing poetic manipulation of linguistic expression at three levels: vocabulary, syntax, and chapters. However, the author finds that there are few studies on the translation of a single character's discourse in the drama from the perspective of the Skopos theory. Therefore, this paper attempts to make a comparative analysis of Liang Shiqiu's and Zhu Shenghao's translation of "Fool's" character's discourse from the perspective of the Skopos theory, so as to have a better understanding of the role, as well as the specific translation purpose, translation strategies and translated text effects.

2. The Skopos Theory

The Skopos theory is the core of the functional translation theory that emerged in Germany in the 1970s, and the main representatives are Reiss, Vermeer, Manttari, and Nord. At the initial stage, Reiss linked language function, discourse type and translation strategy, and put forward the translation-oriented text analysis and criticism theory, thus contributing to the initial formation of functional theoretical ideas (Wang, 2013). Then Vermeer put forward the Skopos theory, emphasizing the decisive role of the purpose of translation and attaching great importance to the audience's standpoint. He stressed that translation is a behavior performed for a specific audience and under specific conditions in a specific context (Nord, 1995). After that, he also tried to combine with the theory of translation behavior emphasized by Manttari to further develop the Skopos theory.

In the later stage, Nord believed that the original author is very concerned about whether the effect of his literary works can be effectively conveyed to readers (Liu, 2009). He introduced the principle of function with loyalty into the functional model, so as to make the translator loyal to both the source language text and the target language text in both directions, thus refining the theory.

The Skopos theory contains three important rules: the Skopos rule, the coherence rule and the fidelity rule. The first and the most basic rule is the Skopos rule. Generally speaking, translation activities are regarded as purposeful activities, and the purpose of translation will have an impact on the translation strategies adopted by the translator and the effect of the text he wants to express in the translation process, so that the translation can exert the maximum effect and value that the translator wants to achieve in the target context. The second rule is the rule of coherence. It requires translators to respect the expression habits and patterns of the target language, make the translation readable and acceptable, and enable readers to understand the translation clearly, so as to achieve the translator's translation purpose. The third rule is the fidelity rule, that is, loyalty to the original text to a certain extent, but the degree of fidelity depends on the translation purpose and the translator's own understanding of the original text.

The Skopos theory has now developed into the basis of universal translation theory, and people use this theory to analyze and study the translation of various types of texts. At present, the text types that are analyzed and studied by the Skopos theory in China mainly include publicity texts, practical texts and literary works, so as to study and discuss how translation purposes affect translation strategies and translation effects.

3. Comparative Analysis of the Translation of the Role "Fool" in Liang and Zhu Texts

Translators' choice of translation strategies according to their translation purposes is bound to be influenced by the background of the times and the acceptability of the target readers. Liang Shiqiu lived in the 1930s, a period when the New Culture Movement had just ended and the Western Enlightenment was further spreading in China. At the same time, Hu Shi, as the head of the translation department of China Education and Culture Foundation, put forward translation requirements for Liang Shiqiu, asking him to keep the flavor of the original Shakespearean dramas, which made Liang Shiqiu, who insisted on the idea of "advocating truth", mainly adopt foreignization translation strategy, emphasize literal translation and add notes to assist understanding when necessary (Li, 2004). Zhu Shenghao lived in the 1940s, when China was backward economically and culturally during the Anti-Japanese War, he was full of patriotic enthusiasm and intended to awaken China people through writing and translation. As the talent scout of Zhu Shenghao, Mr. Zhan Wenxu appreciated his talent, which also strengthened Zhu's determination to translate Shakespeare's works. Zhu Shenghao's translation adhered to the theory of verve, fully considered readers' acceptance. He mainly adopted domestication translation strategy, emphasized free translation, and used a large number of words with China

characteristics, so that Chinese people at that time can better understand Shakespeare's works.

Starting with the three rules of the Skopos theory, this paper makes a comparative analysis of Liang's and Zhu's translation versions of the role of "Fool" to explore the translation strategies used by them and what kind of text effect they achieve.

3.1 The Skopos Rule

When translating Shakespeare's works, the translator must master the characteristics of Shakespeare's works, make clear the purpose of translation, and properly use translation strategies and methods on the basis of ensuring that the translation is still dramatic, so as to make readers or audiences understand the true meaning of the original text.

Example 1: ...Nay, an thou canst not smile as the wind sits, thou'lt catch cold shortly: there, take my coxcomb. Why, this fellow has banished two on's daughters, and did the third a blessing against his will ...

Liang's translation: 哼, 如其你不善顺风转舵, 就会遭受冷待的: 喏, 拿我的帽子去吧. 这家伙已经失掉了他的两个女儿, 无意中对于第三个倒是加以祝福了¹² (12: 故作此反语, 以刺李尔)

Zhu's translation: 要是你不会看准风向把你的笑脸迎上去, 你很快就会着凉的. 来, 把我的鸡冠帽拿去. 嘿, 这家伙撵走了两个女儿, 去赐福于他的第三个女儿, 虽然这不是出于他的本意.....

From the Skopos rule, it is not difficult to find that the translations of "catch cold" in the two translation texts are not the same. In the context of the original text, this is about a conversation between Fool and Minister Kent, and secretly satirizes King Lear's credulity of his two eldest daughters. By irony, Fool warned Kent to "smile as the wind sits", implying that otherwise, he would be treated coldly by King Lear like his two daughters. The literal translation of "cold" does have the meaning of "着凉" translated by Zhu Shenghao, but in this context, the author thinks that "遭受冷待" translated by Liang Shiqiu can better meet the translation purpose of making readers understand. At the same time, Liang Shiqiu added a note at the end of the last sentence to explain it, which is also more in line with the requirements of the Skopos rule. This sentence is actually a satire on King Lear's choice to trust his two hypocritical eldest daughters over his little one who is full of true feelings. Now, this fate has made King Lear see the true faces of his two eldest daughters, and at the same time, his heart is full of remorse for expelling his little daughter. When translating, Zhu Shenghao translated directly according to the original text. Compared with Liang Shiqiu's translation, the sentence pattern in Zhu's translation is slightly lengthy, and from the perspective of drama performance, it is not as concise as Liang's translation.

Example 2: That lord that counsell'd thee / To give away thy land, / Come place him here by me, / Do thou for him stand: / The sweet and bitter fool / Will presently appear; / The one in motley here, / The other found out there.

Liang's translation: 劝你放弃国土的/那一位大人, /叫他和
我来并立, /你先把他替: /忠厚奴和刻薄鬼/立刻都出现; /一
个在此披鹤衣/一个在那边。

Zhu's translation: 哪个爵爷劝告你, /把你的土地全给光; /
叫他站在我身边, /你自己站这旁: /一个傻瓜甜, /一个傻瓜
苦; /甜的穿彩衣, /苦的丢掉王权无处诉。

From the above comparison, people can find that Liang Shiqiu and Zhu Shenghao have adopted different translation strategies for "The sweet and bitter fool" in this example. Liang Shiqiu translated it as "忠厚奴和刻薄鬼", while Zhu Shenghao literally translated it as "一个傻瓜甜, 一个傻瓜苦". Combined with the context, this sentence mainly satirizes and reveals the tragic present situation of King Lear by comparing the situation of two daughters and King Lear through Fool's words. Zhu Shenghao's translation can make readers understand the meaning of the original text more clearly, and highlight King Lear's misery and deserved fate by means of contrast. The Chinese meanings of "sweet" and "bitter" can not only describe the taste, but also describe the quality of life. Here, the words "傻瓜甜" and "傻瓜苦" in Zhu Shenghao's translation refer to the happy days after the two daughters divided up their land, and the miserable days when King Lear lost his land and suffered the cold treatment of his two daughters, which respectively correspond to the following "穿彩衣" and "丢掉王权无处诉". However, Liang Shiqiu's translation of this sentence is rather awkward to read, which is not in line with the expression habit of China's discourse, and compared the two translation versions, Zhu's translation is obviously more in line with the requirements of the Skopos rule.

3.2 The Coherence Rule

When translating Shakespeare's works, the translator must deal with sentence patterns and phrases carefully, so as to make the sentence patterns fluent, the phrases coherent, and in line with the idioms of the translated language. Only in this way can the original meaning be better conveyed to readers with good quality, so that they can better understand the works.

Example 3: Have more than thou showest, / Speak less than
thou knowest, / Lend less than thou owest, / Ride more than
thou goest, / Learn more than thou trowest, / Set less than thou
throwest; / Leave thy drink and thy whore, / And keep
in-a-door, / And thou shalt have more / Than two tens to a
score.

Liang's translation: 有的要比露出来的多, /你知道的别尽量
的说, /出借不可多于你所有, /能骑马时莫要徒步走, /多听
而不可太轻信, /赌注不可过于野心, /莫纵酒, 莫宿娼, /足
迹不可出户堂, /你再数你的那二十, /就将不只是个双十。

Zhu's translation: 多积财, 少摆阔; /耳多听, 花少说。/少放款,
多借债; /走路不如骑马快。/三言之中一语, /多掷骰子少
下注。/莫饮酒, 莫嫖娼; /闭门不出最为上。/会打算的占便宜,
/不会打算叹口气。

Comparing the two versions, the author finds that firstly there

are great differences in sentence patterns between the two translation versions. Liang Shiqiu chose to be faithful to the original sentence pattern and translate it step by step, while Zhu Shenghao chose to simplify the translation of the original sentence pattern on the basis of understanding the original meaning.

In terms of content, there is not much difference between the two translations, mainly focusing on the treatment of the last two sentences. The direct translation of the original text can be interpreted as "you will count more than double tens", because the original text is a song sung by Fool, the meaning may not be so obvious, and thus both of them translated the last two lines according to their own understanding.

From the aspect of sentence coherence or rhythm, Liang Shiqiu respects the rhythm of the original to a great extent, and all the translations use the ending rhyme; Zhu Shenghao, on the other hand, largely favors the rhythm of counting, that is, the upper-sixth and lower-seventh stanzas, with the upper stanza in the form of a three-three stanza line, and the lower stanza in the form of a two-two-three stanza line; at the same time, the upper and lower stanzas are in the form of end rhymes. The author thinks that based on the rule of coherence, the two versions have their own characteristics, but considering the drama and the target language environment, Zhu Shenghao's translation may be more in line with the reading environment, and it is easier for readers to accept and understand when translated into jingles.

Example 4: ...But I will tarry; the fool will stay, / And let the
wise man fly: / The knave turns fool that runs away; / The fool
no knave, perdy.

Liang's translation: /但是我不走: 傻子要停留, /让聪明人高
飞远引: /逃走的臣仆才是傻子。/我这傻子倒真不是恶棍。

Zhu's translation: /但是我这傻瓜将要留下, /让聪明人全都
飞散; /逃走的混蛋变成真正的傻瓜, /那傻瓜弄人却不是混
蛋。

Combined with the context, this is a conversation between Fool and loyal Minister Kent. King Lear's daughter wants to reduce the number of followers with King Lear, and treat King Lear with increasing indifference, even detain Kent. This sentence pattern is relatively simple, except that the words "Knaves" and "Fool" appear repeatedly in the last two sentences, but the two translations are quite different. In translation, Liang Shiqiu chose to add the word "臣仆" in the context of translation, while Zhu Shenghao followed the sentence pattern and usage of the original text and compared "混蛋" with "傻子".

The author thinks that based on the rule of coherence, Zhu Shenghao's translation is easier for readers to understand, and at the same time, it is more fluent in sentence patterns. Moreover, for the treatment of the first sentence, Liang Shiqiu chose to respect the original sentence pattern, although the original describes the same person and the same thing, while Zhu Shenghao combined them into one sentence. The author thinks that Zhu Shenghao's translation in this way can make people see at a glance whether it is reading or stage

presentation.

3.3 The Fidelity Rule

The translator's purpose of translation and the understanding of the original text will affect the choice of translation strategy and the effect of translation to different degrees. To a certain extent, translating the original text according to one's own understanding will also affect the reading experience of the readers, and will not be able to convey the spirit or connotation of the original text to the readers.

Example 5: Fool had ne'er less grace in a year; / For wise men are grown foppish, / And know not how their wits to wear, / Their manners are so apish.

Liang's translation: 如今傻子最不受欢迎; / 因为聪明人都变蠢了, / 不知怎样做个明白人, / 举动是如此装腔作调。

Zhu's translation: 这年头傻瓜已经不吃香, / 聪明人个个变了蠢猪, / 顶着个头没有思想, / 做起事来稀里糊涂。

Through comparison, it is obvious that Liang Shiqiu mainly adopts free translation, while Zhu Shenghao adopts literal translation method. Their translation tone is basically similar, and they both translate "foppish" as stupid. Zhu Shenghao's translation uses a large number of words with China characteristics, such as "不吃香", "蠢猪" and "稀里糊涂". In the author's opinion, although "蠢猪" is very grounded, and it also realizes the mocking meaning of "making a fool of people" to the fullest extent, but to a certain extent, it is a bit over-translated and over-exaggerated, including the phrase "顶着个头没有思想" at the end. On the contrary, Liang Shiqiu only slightly translated the original meaning of "foppish" into stupid, which made the translation more in line with the original meaning and met the requirements of the rule of fidelity.

Example 6: ...But for all this thou shalt have as many dolours for thy daughters as thou canst tell in a year.

Liang's translation: 不过, 虽是如此, 你为了你的女儿们所感受的“隐怨”¹³, 将要和你在一年内所能数的清的“银元”一般多哩! (¹³: dolours和dollars二字相近)

Zhu's translation: 虽然这样说, 您因女儿们还要得到数不清的烦恼哩。

This sentence is one of the most wonderful translations that the author thinks. Although Zhu Shenghao's translation is more in line with the requirements from the rule of fidelity, the author thinks that Liang Shiqiu's translation is unique. The word "Dolours" in the original text was very similar to the word "dollars" when the author read it for the first time. The author did not expect Liang Shiqiu would make an effective correlation between the two words and translate them. The original text didn't mention the content of "dollar". Liang Shiqiu adopted the method of augmented translation here to add the meaning of "dollar", and when translating the two words, he also took great pains to translate them into homophones of "隐怨" and "银元", so as to imply that King Lear's troubles would be many. This translation is, in the

author's opinion, excellent both in terms of diction and fidelity.

4. Conclusion

Fool plays a finishing touch in the whole play. He appears to be acting crazy, but in reality he reveals his wit and intelligence. His words in the play are basically ditties and ditties, catchy and seemingly crazy, but these words are full of life philosophy.

Generally speaking, Liang Shiqiu's translation mainly adopts free translation, which is also in line with his emphasis on "literary nobility" (Li, 2012). His translation purpose is largely purely because of his love for Shakespeare's literary works, readers can clearly feel the profound literary charm of his translation in terms of word processing. At the same time, when dealing with some words with deep western culture in the play, on the basis of respecting the original text to a great extent, he adopts such means as adding annotations and augmented translation to help readers better understand the content of the work. While Zhu Shenghao's translation is more grounded and adopts literal translation method, such as "蠢猪" and "不吃香" in the above examples. Because his translation purpose is very clear, influenced by his patriotic passion, his biggest purpose in translating Shakespeare's works is to make Chinese people better understand Shakespeare's works, thus arousing Chinese people's determination to fight tenaciously. Therefore, in his translation, literal translation is adopted as much as possible, and a large number of words with Chinese Characteristics are used, so as to better meet his purpose.

In terms of the rule of coherence and fidelity, both of their translation have their own characteristics, both of which are based on their own translation purposes and their own understanding of the original. Liang Shiqiu's translation may not be as coherent as Zhu Shenghao's, because Liang Shiqiu insists on being faithful to the original to the greatest extent, which will make it more or less difficult for the target readers to read. However, Zhu Shenghao's translation may not be as faithful as Liang Shiqiu's because it uses a large number of China-specific words and wants the translation to be more popular and easy to understand. However, the two versions occupy an unshakable position in the cultural stage of Shakespeare's translation and have a far-reaching influence on Shakespeare's translation.

References

- [1] Nord, Christine. *Translating as A Purposeful Activity -Functionalist Approaches Explained* [M]. Harvard University Press, 1995.
- [2] Shakespeare William. *The tragedy of King Lear*[M]. New York: Washington Square Press, 1957.
- [3] 陈洁. 从语用学角度看《李尔王》译本语言解构变化[J]. 语文建设, 2016 (06): 77-78.
- [4] 邓慧. 翻译诗学视照下《李尔王》中译本比较研究[D]. 中南大学, 2012.
- [5] 刘佳. 翻译目的论视角下莎士比亚《仲夏夜之梦》三种中译本评析[J]. 辽宁师范大学学报(社会科学版), 2009, 32 (04): 95-98.

- [6] 梁实秋译. 中英对照—李尔王[M]. 北京: 中国广播电视出版社, 远东图书公司, 2002.
- [7] 李伟民. 中国莎士比亚翻译研究五十年[J]. 中国翻译, 2004, (05): 48-55.
- [8] 李媛慧, 任秀英. 朱生豪与梁实秋的莎剧翻译对比研究[J]. 外语与外语教学, 2012 (06): 79-81+93.
- [9] 王维中. “目的论”—翻译理论的新视角[J]. 首都外语论坛, 2013 (01): 288-295.
- [10] 朱生豪译. 莎士比亚戏剧经典—李尔王[M]. 北京: 中国国际广播出版社, 2001.