

A Systemic Approach to Translating Style: a comparative study of four Chinese translations of Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*

Elaine Y. L. Ng

School of Continuing Education, General and Professional Studies Division

Hong Kong Baptist University

elaineng(a)hkbu.edu.hk

ABSTRACT

The visibility of translators in translated texts has been increasingly recognised, yet research on the translator's voice and the methodological issues concerned has remained sparse. Corpus-based methods allow only limited access to the motivation of the translator's choices, and need to be complemented by other research tools to form a coherent methodology for investigating a translator's style.

The thesis adopts an interdisciplinary approach, combining systemic linguistics and corpus studies with sociohistorical research within a descriptive framework to study the translator's discursive presence in the text. This approach is as yet underexplored in translation studies.

My work examines four Chinese translations of Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952), by Hai Guan (1956), Wu Lao (1987), Li Xiyin (1987) and Zhao Shaowei (1987). The investigation concerns the rendering of transitivity, modality, direct speech and free direct thought presentation as well as the transitions of modes of point of view. It also inquires into the causes of the variation in style between the four translators. I map textual features onto specific sociocultural and ideological contexts of production in an attempt to identify correlations between them. Another objective is to test the applicability of Halliday's transitivity model (1994) and Simpson's model of point of view (1993) to the analysis of Chinese translated texts, and to explore possible adjustments to these models to make them serviceable for translation comparison between English and Chinese.

The thesis has six chapters: (1) Theoretical approaches, methodological tools and framework, (2) Location of the texts within the sociocultural contexts, (3) Translation of the transitivity system, (4) Translation of point of view, (5) Critical analysis of individual examples and (6) Motivations for translation shifts.

KEYWORDS: corpus-based studies, interdisciplinary approach to translation research, motivations for translation shifts, socio-historical research, systemic linguistics, translation of point of view, translation of the transitivity system, translator's voice.

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