

Liang Shiqiu' s translation

By Zhou Yujuan&Su Lin 2020/10/18

1:Character introduction

(1) Life experience

Liang Shiqiu was born in a rich family in Beijing in 1903,Whose grandfather was a government official of Qing Dynasty.As a distinguished essayist,literary critic,translator,lexicographer,scholar of English literature,devoted his whole life to his academic career.With a life full of contributions,the great scholar passed away in 1987.

(2)study experience

In 1915,Liang was admitted into Tsinghua School,which was an eight-year high including both junior and senior sections.In 1923,Liang went to America to pursue further study at the University of Colorado.After a year' s study at school ,Liang was recommended to Harvard University to study for his M.A.degree.In 1930,Liang arrived in Qingdao with his family,and worked as a teacher in Qingdao University.For some reasons,Liang came back to Beijing in 1934,and was engaged as a research professor as well as dean of Foreign Languages Department of Peking University.

2:Representative works

Far East English-Chinese Dictionary(《远东英汉大辞典》)

New Practical English-Chinese Dictionary (《最新实用英汉辞典》)

Peter Pan (1927)

Cicero' s Treatise(1934)

The Meditations (1959)

Animal Farm(1956)

Shakespeare(1930-1967)

3:Translation view

(1)Idea of Translator

01:Translator should not translate the works of the third language

02:Translator must be faithful to the original

03:Translator should keep readers in mind

(2)Methods of Translation

01:Literal translation on basis of sentence level

Liang Shiqiu' s translation took sentences as its basic units and took the whole text into consideration at the same time. It tried to reproduce both the content and the style of the original works and retained as much as possible the figures of speech.

Sometimes,free translation was also adopted when it was really impossible for him to do literal translation. In the literal translation, liang shiqiu try to be flexible, not rigid translation rules, and in free translation, he tried to avoid any fabrication. Here is an example from *The First Part of King Henry the Fourth*.

My father, in kind heart and pity mov' d,

Swore him assistance and perform' d it too. (Act IV, SCENE III)

Liang Shiqiu' s version :

我的父亲心肠太好，被怜悯心所动，就答应帮助他，而且真的帮助了。

In this example, there are two clauses in the Chinese version, but only one in the English version .

02:Poetry into Prose

Liang Shiqiu translated Shakespeare mainly in the form of prose. The second item in the introductory remarks to each play of his translation is as follows:

(ii). Most part of the source text was written in blank verse. A few were prose and the least was” rhymed antithetic parallelism”. The translation is mainly in the form of prose in vernacular Chinese, but all the rhymes and episodes are translated in the form of crambo to distinguish.

The following example from *The Life and Death of Julius Caesar* would further show his translation method of “poetry into prose” .

*O! then that we could come by Caesar's spirit,
And not dismember Caesar. But, alas!
Caesar must bleed for it. And, gentle friends,
Let's kill him boldly, but not wrathfully;
Let's carve him as a carcass fit for hounds:
And after seem to chide' em. This shall make
Our purpose necessary and not envious;
Which So appearing to the common eyes,
We shall be call'd purgers, not murderers.
And, for Mark Antony, think not of him;For he can do no more than Caesar's arm
When Caesar' s head is off. (ACT IISCENEI)*

Liang Shiqiu' s version:

我们的举动好像是太残忍了一些，凯耶斯凯西阿斯，斩了头还要砍四肢，好像是一怒杀人而余恨未消;因为安东尼不过是西撒的一肢;我们要做献祭者，不要做屠夫，凯耶斯。我们全都是起来反抗西撒的精神;人的精神里是没有血的.:啊!但愿我们能够捉捕西撒的精神而无需肢解西撒。但是，哎呀!西撒一定要因此而流血的。好朋友们，我们要勇敢的杀掉他，但不是愤怒的;我们把他切割成为献给神明的祭品，不是宰割一具尸体拿去喂狗:我们的心要像是狡诈的主人们，激起他们的仆人们做出暴行，事后再作出谴责他们的样子，这样便可使人看出，我们的行动乃是出于不得已，而不是由于嫉恨;在一般人心目中，我们将被称为扫除恶势力的志士，而不是凶手.至于马克安东尼，不必考虑他;因为西撒的头被砍掉之后，他不见得能比西撒的一条胳膊更为有力。(梁实秋, 2001:65)

03:Annotation

Having in mind the spirit of seriousness and the responsibility for readers, LiangShiqiu adopted the annotation frequently in his translation of Shakespeare. He annotated the puns and allusions at the end of each play of his translation when they are hard to be properly translated into another language. This was influenced by his literary thought of “ponderance of literature” . Examples from *Anthony and Cleopatra* given as follows could better explain Liang Shiqiu' s employment of the annotation. Here is an example from *Anthony and Cleopatra* .

*Good now, some excellent fortune! Let me be married to three kings in a forenoon,
and widow them all; let me have a child at fifty, to whom Herod of Jewry may do homage;
find me to marry me with Octavius Caesar, and companion me with my mistress. (ACT
I SCENE II)*

Liang Shiqiu's version:

好啦,说一点好的命运吧!让我一上午嫁三个国王,作三回寡妇;让我五十岁生个孩子,犹太的希律王都会来向他致敬;给我发现我将来要嫁给奥大维西撒,把我放在和我的女主人同等的位置上。(梁实秋,2001:19)

注释:

⑥犹太的希律王(Herod of Jewry),奇迹剧中常见之一角色,为一狂放的暴君,曾杀戮婴儿无数以期铲除预言即将降临之救世上。

In this example, “犹太的希律王” is strange to the Chinese people, Liang Shiqiu annotated it in this way so that the Chinese readers could understand, and also retain the exotic flavor of the original text through literal translation, which would better promote cultural exchanges between the two different cultures.

4: Figure evaluation

(1) Scholar Liu Bingshan's view

We didn't know that there was a translation of The Complete Works of Shakespeare in Taiwan until recent years. Liang's translation is not characterized by beautiful words and expressions, but by its faithfulness to the original. Liang avoided tampering with the original text, never evaded translation difficulties, always tried to be faithful to the original... In general, Liang's translation is reliable and smooth. Those who haven't learnt English but want to know Shakespeare can see a truer Shakespeare by reading Liang's version. (1991: 87)

(2) Scholar Wu Xizhen's view

Translating Shakespeare is a huge task, as well as Professor Liang's lifelong career. His translations are much like academic versions. Thanks to his profound knowledge and excellent writing skill, Liang had a thorough understanding of Shakespeare and sufficiently conveyed the meaning of Shakespeare in the Chinese versions. His translations are faithful without losing elegance and fluency. (Chen Zishan, 1992: 57)

(3) Scholar He Qixin's view

Though most of the translations of Shakespeare available could meet the need of common readers, as to critics, playwrights, and particularly scholars who want a translation which is faithful, and includes the research fruit of Shakespeare over several hundred years at home and abroad, Liang's translation is no doubt the one closest to these two requirements. (2002: 2)

5: Summary

Throughout his life, Liang Shiqiu's contribution in translation is undoubtedly a valuable treasure in the history of modern Chinese literature. As a summary of more than 60 years of translation experience, faith in Translation embodies the essence of his translation thoughts. The attitude of being responsible for readers and the concept of attaching importance to the research work of the translator are worth learning from later generations.

6: References

- [1] 梁实秋的翻译思想及译例赏析[J].熊自丽.祖国,2017(18):77.
- [2] 论梁实秋翻译思想——析《翻译的信念》[J].冯春波.嘉兴学院学报,2018,30(04):100-104.

- [3] 梁实秋先生的翻译贡献及翻译观[J]. 马博. 兰台世界, 2017(15):120-122.
- [4] 梁实秋对莎士比亚的翻译与研究[J]. 许祖华. 外国文学研究, 1995(02):40-41.
- [5] 梁实秋的翻译思想及译例赏析[J]. 熊自丽. 祖国, 2017(18):77.
- [6] 梁实秋先生对翻译的贡献[J]. 王建敏. 兰台世界, 2012(28):15-16.
- [7] 梁实秋的翻译观初探[J]. 赵军峰, 魏辉良. 湖北师范学院学报(哲学社会科学版), 1996(04):90-94.
- [8] 从多元系统理论看梁实秋译《哈姆雷特》的策略[J]. 魏贝贝. 青年文学家, 2011(23):202.
- [9] 'Translator studies': Liang Shiqiu's discourse on translation[J]. Liping Bai, 2011, 12(1).
- [10] On Liang Shiqiu's Translation of The Complete Works of Shakespeare in China[J]. Shakespeare Review, 2010, 46(1).
- [11] The Promethean translator and cannibalistic pains: Lu Xun's "hard translation" as a political allegory[J]. Pu Wang. Translation Studies, 2013, 6(3).