

Explicitation in the Translation of Children's Literature—A Case Study of the Chinese Version of the Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Zhang Yousong and Zhang Zhenxian*

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Abstract: Since the Explicitation Hypothesis was put forward in 1986, it has attracted the attention of academic circles. Although there is no consensus on the classification of explicitation, it does not affect scholars' strong interest in its research. Mark Twain's "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" is a shining jewel of American literature and has been translated into various languages. Huck's innocence has also deeply attracted children and even adult readers from all over the world. By comparing the Chinese version of The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Zhang Yousong and Zhang Zhenxian's with its original English text, from the perspective of the explicitation of the ideational function information, the interpersonal function information, and the textual function information, we have found explicitation is quite obvious in Zhang Yousong & Zhang Zhen Xianzhong's Chinese translation, especially the explicitation of the ideational information.

1. The Concept of Explicitation

The term explicitation was first proposed by Vinay & Darbelnet (1958/1995)^[1] as a translation technique. As a translation skill, it means that the translator explicitly expresses the information that is implicit but can be deduced based on the specific context in the source text. Nida Taber (1969: 164-165)^[2] pointed out that a good translation tends to be longer than the source text, mainly because in the translation process, the translator increases the redundancy of the translation within an appropriate limit by expressing the implicit information in the source text. His remarks were made mainly about the "new information" in translation from the perspective of language and cultural differences and the acceptability. Blum-Kulka conducted a systematic study of explicitation and in 1986 put forward the explicitation hypothesis: "Translations are more explicit than source texts." She believes "Translations tend to contain more redundancy and explicit cohesion than their source texts" (Blum-Kulka, 1986: 300)^[3]. Baker (1996: 180)^[4] generalizes three common features of the translated text, explicitation being one of them (explicitation hypothesis, together with simplification hypothesis and normalization hypothesis are considered three universals of translation). Here "universals of translation" means the typical language features that appear in the translated text rather than the source texts, and these features are not the result of language interference. Regarding the classification of explicitation, there is no consensus among scholars. Vinay & Darbelnet (1958/1995: 24) divides explicitation into lexical explicitation and information explicitation. Based on the formation, Klaudy (2004:81)^[5] divides explicitation into mandatory explicitation, non-mandatory explicitation, pragmatic explicitation, and translation inherent explicitation. Chinese scholars also classify explicitation into differently based on different standards, such as Huang Libo, Hu Kaibao, Zhu Yifan and others mentioned below.

2. The Explicitation Study at Home and Abroad

As early as the early 1960s, in the western translation circles, some people noticed and began to study explicitation in translation. Especially with the development of corpus linguistics, many scholars use parallel corpora or comparable corpora to study this phenomenon. Some scholars approach explicitation by comparing the translated text with the source text, and others by comparing the translated text with the text of non-translated target language or both (Johansson,

1998^[6]; Olohan & Baker, 2000^[7]; Puurtinen, 2004^[8]). In 2013, the masterpiece published by Margherita Ippolito^[9] was a breakthrough in this research field. With the help of corpus linguistic research tools, she self-constructed a comparable corpus of children's classic novel translation corpus and children's classic novel non-translated corpus to explore whether the universals of simplification, explicitation, and normalization of translation language proposed by Mona Baker are applicable to the Italian translation of children's books. She concludes that the status of translated children's literature, the relationship between the source language and the target language, and the relevant cultural, historical and social environmental factors all will affect the translator's translation choice. The researches on explicitation mentioned above are mainly carried out in Indo-European languages, and their conclusions and research results still need to be further tested in non-Indo-European languages.

Chinese scholars have also shown great interest in explicitation, and they have studied it from different perspectives. He Xianbin (2003)^[10] first conducted empirical research in the exploration of the explicitation of English-Chinese translation. Ke Fei (2005)^[11], Zhou Hongmin (2007)^[12], Huang Libo (2008)^[13], Liu Zequan, Hou Yu (2008)^[14], Hu Kaibao, Zhu Yifan (2008)^[15], Ren Xiaohua (2015)^[16], Xu Jiajin, Xu Xiuling (2016)^[17], approach explicitation from different aspect. Hu Kaibao and Zhu Yifan(2008), categorize explicitation into ideational information explicitation, interpersonal information explicitation, and textual information explicitation. Based on this classification, they compared the two Chinese versions of Hamlet (Liang Shiqiu's translation and Zhu Shenghao's translation). Hu et al made a qualitative and quantitative study of explicitation employed in the two Chinese versions. Generally speaking, so far, the research on explicitation at home and abroad is mostly empirical research, focusing on testifying whether the explicitation hypothesis is universal in the translation process of various languages.

3. Analysis of Explicitation in the Chinese Version of the Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

Translation is a cross-language and cross-cultural communication activity, and the translated text must conform to the thinking mode and thinking habits of the target language speakers. However, as there are striking differences in the thinking pattern and expressions between English and Chinese, in the translation process, the translator should take into full account these differences to make the translation acceptable by the target language.

For children's literature translation, due to its specificity of the reader's cognition and psychology, for the culturally specific information in the source language, the translator may consciously use explicitation techniques in order to achieve a function similar to the source language text. The information implicit in the source text can be clearly stated, which can also improve the acceptability of the translation and attract readers of the target language.

By comparing the original English text of the first 20 chapters of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and its Chinese version by Zhang Yousong Zhang Zhenxianzhong, we get the ratio of English words to Chinese characters is 1:1.58 (Appendix), which is consistent with Blum-Kulka's explicitation hypothesis.

Halliday (1985:31)^[18] believes that language has different functions. He thus classified language functions into ideational metafunction, interpersonal metafunction and textual metafunction. In the translation process, the translator should try to use a language that conforms to the target language to convey the language functions of the source language text. Based on Halliday's three major meta-functions of the language, and the language functions embodied by the implicit information of the source text, Hu Kaibao and Zhu Yifan classify explicitation into explicitation of ideational information, explicitation of interpersonal information, and explicitation of textual information. Based on this classification, the writer carried out a quantitative analysis of explicitation embodied in the first 20 chapters of the Chinese version of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Zhang Yousong and Zhang Zhenxian.

3.1 Explicitation of Ideational Information

In order to make the target language better understood and accepted by the target language

readers, when translating children's literature, the translator expresses explicitly the ideational information implicit in the source text, mainly in the following ways: (i) explicitation of the conceptual meaning: practice of the translator to clearly explain the specific meaning of a general word or a cover term in the specific context in the target language text; (ii) explicitation of the actor and the patient of an action, that is, for the sake of readers' understanding, the translator explains the actor or patient of the implicit actions in the source text; (iii) explicitation of cultural information, that is, the translator uses annotation or explanation translation methods to explain the culturally specific terms in the source text (this study only counts the latter); (iv) explicitation of the pragmatic meaning, namely, the translator conveys the equivalent pragmatic meaning of some rhetorical devices or expressions in the source text. (In the following examples, the underline and the italicization are added by the writer for easier reading).

For instance:

- ①a: Jim whispered and said he was feeling powerful sick, and told me to come along. (Twain, 1995:122)^[19]
- ①b: Jimu qiaoqiaoer shuo ta juede ting bu duijiner, jiao wo genzhe ta zou.(Zhang Yousong, Zhang Zhenxian,1978:74)^[20].
- ②a: ... don't touch me — don't! hands off — they're cold; let go. Oh, let a poor devil alone!(Twain,1995:80)^[19]
- ②b: Bie dong wo——Biedong!Sashou——bingliang de shou ya; fang le wo ba. O, Bie chanzhu wo zhe daomeidan a!(Zhang Yousong, Zhang Zhenxian,1978:32)^[20]
- In Example①, “sick” was specifically rendered into “bu duijiner”; and“ta” in ① b and “wo”in ②b are examples of explicitation of the patient or actor of the action concerned respectively.
- ③a: I slipped the ramrod down it to make sure it was loaded, then I laid it across the turnip barrel, pointing towards pap, and set down behind it to wait for him to stir. (Twain, 1995:81)^[19]
- ③b: Wo lakai qiangshuan, qiao qingchu ta dique zhuangzhe zidan, ranhou wo jiu bata jiazai luobotong shang, qiangkou duizhun le ba, wo jiu zuozai houmian dengzhe ta dongtan.(Zhang Yousong, Zhang Zhenxian,1978:32)^[20]

In Example ③, "loaded" in the source text is translated as “zhuangzhe zidan”, and “stir” is rendered into “dongtan” , both of which are given more specific meaning based on the context; in addition, to facilitate understanding, the translator adds “qiangkou” and “wo” as the subject of the two actions “pointing” and “set down”.

- ④a: Says I, for two cents I'd leave the blamed country and never come a-near it agin. (Twain, 1995:77-78)^[19]
- ④b: woshuo,wo buguan sanqi ershiyi, fanzheng de likai zhege hundan de guojia, yibezi dou buzai zhan ta de bian. (Zhang Yousong, Zhang Zhenxian, 1978:29)^[20]
- ⑤a: Every time he got money he got drunk; and every time he got drunk he raised Cain around town; and every time he raised Cain he got jailed. (Twain, 1995:74)^[19]
- ⑤b: Meihui ta nadao qian jiu hege lanzui; meihui hezui le, jiu dao zhenshang naoge tianfan difu; mei hui naochu luanzi, jiu jiao renjia gei guanqilai.(Zhang Yousong, Zhang Zhenxian,1978:25)^[20]

Here, “for two cents” in Example ④ and “raised Cain” in Example ⑤ are both culture loaded expressions, and the translators directly translate their implied pragmatic and cultural meanings.

3.2 Explicitation of Interpersonal Information

Due to the cultural differences between the English and Chinese languages, in order to make it easier for the target language readers to understand the relationship between the characters in the source text and their emotions, the translator often makes explicit the relationship between the characters which is implied in the source text. The attitude, the emotions of the characters, as well as their judgments and evaluations in the source text are often clearly conveyed into the target language. Explicitation of interpersonal information mainly includes: (i) The explicitation of the

relationship between the characters: the translator may make the relationship between the characters clear by adding appellation expressions or through the selection of some sentence patterns; (ii) the explicitation of the modal meaning (iii) the explicitation of the appraisal meaning.

⑥a: *The two young men* looked dark, but never said nothing. (Twain, 1995:167)^[19]

⑥b: Boke de liangge gege xianchu yinchenchen de shenqi, keshi yijuhua ye buhui shuo. (Zhang Yousong, Zhang Zhenxian, 1978:120)^[20]

In the above example, “the two young men” is translated as “Boke de liangge gege” to clarify the relationship between the characters. In addition, Zhang Yousong and Zhang Zhenxian frequently used tone adverbs to express the tone and attitude of the characters. They use “fanzheng” to make the translation more colloquial and use “jianzhi” to strengthen the speaker’s mood or attitude (Example ⑦). In other words, they translate in children’s language.

For example:

⑦a: I run along the bank a piece and got aboard, and Jim he grabbed me and hugged me, he was so glad to see me. (Twain, 1995:176)^[19]

⑦b: wo shunzhe he an zou le jibu, jiu shangle mupai, jimu bawo jiuzhu, shijin louzhe wo, ta kanjian wo huilai jianzhi gaoxing tou le. (Zhang Yousong, Zhang Zhenxian, 1978:130)^[20]

3.3 Explicitation of Textual Information

There are also striking differences in textualities between English and Chinese. Therefore, in translating, the translator may organize the translated text in accordance with the norms of the target language. In the E-C translation process, the translator often makes obvious the implied logic relationship between the sentences in the source text. The main explicitation of textual information are as follows: (i) Explicitly conveying what the personal pronouns, demonstrative pronouns, and other cohesive devices refer to; (ii) supplying the omitted information; (iii) adding connectives in the translation to make the logical relationship between sentences explicit.

For instance:

⑧a: “I will reveal it to you, for I feel I may have confidence in you. (Twain, 1995:183)^[19]

⑧b: “Wo ba zhege mimi shuogei nimen ting ba, yinwei wo juede wo hai keyi xindeguo nimen. (Zhang Yousong, Zhang Zhenxian, 1978:137-138)^[20]

⑨a: --- “...what are you heaving your pore broken heart at us f’r? WE hain’t done nothing.”
---“No, I know you haven’t. I ain’t blaming you, gentlemen. (Twain, 1995:182)^[19]

⑨b: ---.....Ni na ni nake kelian de, shangtou le de xin chong women fa shenme laosao ya? Wo men you meiyou dezui ni.

---shi ya, wo yeshi zhidao nimen meiyou dezui wo. wo bingbushi maiyuan nimen, zhuwei. (Zhang Yousong, Zhang Zhenxian, 1978:137)^[20]

⑩a: ...he wouldn’t mind it if we called him plain “Bridgewater,” which, he said, was a title anyway, and not a name... (Twain, 1995:183)^[19]

⑩b: Napa wo men jiu guang zhi cheng ta ge “buli jihuade”, ta ye buzaihu, yinwei, na haodai zongshige juewei de chenghu, er bushi ge xingming..... (Zhang Yousong, Zhang Zhenxian, 1978:138)^[20]

The pronoun “it” in Example ⑧ is translated into “mimi”, clearly explaining what it refers to. In Example ⑨ “I know you haven’t” is translated into “wo yeshi zhidao nimen meiyou dezui wo”, and the omitted elements in the source sentence are clearly stated in the target text. The translation of example ⑩ adds the conjunction “yinwei” to make the logical relationship between sentences obvious.

The following table is the statistics of explicitation included in the first twenty chapters of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* translated by Zhang Yousong and Zhang Zhenxian.

Table 1. Statistics of Explicitation in Chapters 1-20

chapter	Total number of Chinese characters	Explicitation of ideational information(unit:case)		Explicitation of ideational information(unit:case)			Frequency(ratio of character / case)
		Explicitation of conceptual information	Explicitation of cultural and pragmatic information	Explicitation of the referent	Explicitation of the omitted elements	Explicitation of the logical relations	
1	2211	55	4	12	5	4	18.4
2	3610	64	3	11	3	7	33.1
3	2694	65	11	12	1	3	26.1
4	1932	48	2	5	2	1	27.2
5	2628	78	17	9	4	3	20.5
6	4561	138	6	12	0	2	25.2
7	4340	115	0	13	4	10	25.5
8	6956	189	5	22	12	7	26.5
9	2478	48	1	7	0	2	38.7
10	2193	52	0	15	2	0	29.2
11	4614	94	2	8	10	2	31.2
12	4653	125	12	12	9	12	24.4
13	3212	88	11	5	3	2	27.5
14	2475	44	13	5	0	4	32.6
15	3994	90	9	13	10	5	28.1
16	5530	158	6	20	10	3	26.0
17	5425	118	5	11	5	3	35.2
18	7663	1696	14	21	8	29.1	
19	5695	143	10	16	10	7	29.4
20	5796	124	12	20	9	2	32.4
sum	82660	2005	135	242	120	87	28.5
		2115		449			

4. Discussion

We know literature has no national boundaries, neither children's literature does. But there is no denying that Chinese culture is quite different from the English culture. As language is the carrier of culture, translation is by no means a simple conversion between words, but a cross-cultural communication activity. Wang Weiqiang and Xie Hongfang (2010)^[21] believe that Explicitation of the implicit meaning in the source text is essential to promote the understanding and acceptability of target readers especially for children. They also believe that the larger the social and cultural gap between the two languages involved in translation, the more explanatory explicitation may be needed.

However, the translation of children's literature is far more than cross-cultural communication activity, as there are special characteristics with the target readers---children. Children, with simple knowledge and experience, showcase special cognitive and psychological features. If the translation is mainly rendered mainly by foreignization, though child readers can learn some exotic new things, they are likely to lose interest in reading on as the translation is too difficult to understand. That is, due to the special cognitive state of child readers, translators of children's works may often resort to domestication and even renders explicit some information implicit in the source text. For instance, translators often consciously use connectives to show the logical relationship between sentences and/or paragraphs, to clarify the relations between the characters

and supply the omitted elements etc. to facilitate the comprehension and to improve the acceptability of the translation. Just as child readers differ greatly from adults in cognition, values etc., the language of children's literature is supposed to be vivid, concise and beautiful. Only vivid language can arouse the interest of the child readers, and thus they can easily combine the information provided by the translation with their own experience to achieve a better understanding of the work. To make the translation vivid and appealing to children, translators have to make obvious the hidden information (the attitude or tone) in the source text, and that is why explicitation is frequently found in the translation of children's literature.

To conclude, explicitation in translation not only increases the use of connectives to achieve coherence and cohesion, but also involves the conversion of words, the conveyance of cultural loaded words, and even the transformation of literary imageries.

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