

Evaluation of Michael Berry's Translation of *To Live* from Metafunctional Approach

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Abstract—Standing distinctively out from his other works, *To Live* signifies the sharp turning of Yu Hua's writing style from avant-garde experimenting to the mature novel narrating. The English Version *To Live* translated by the American scholar Michael Berry made its appearance in 2003, winning generous appreciation of the American readers from all walks of life. Compared with the extensive study conducted on the original text, the study of the English version, especially its C-E translation, is relatively few and limited. To assess the C-E translation of the novel, the thesis adopts a feasible approach from systemic functional linguistics—metafunction theory. Based on the three metafunctions, this paper makes a detailed comparative study between the original text and its corresponding translation so as to find out the merits and demerits of the C-E translation as well as the underlying causes. This thesis makes an objective study of the C-E translation of the English version, intending to provide constructive reference for the objective judgment of Berry's version as well as the improvement of the future translation.

Index Terms—metafunction, *To Live*, C-E translation

I. INTRODUCTION

As one of the most shining contemporary writers, Yu Hua enjoys a high reputation both at home and abroad. Regarded as the most profound voice coming out of China today, Yu Hua's works have been translated into multiple languages. Yu Hua, instead of being self-satisfied, has always been challenging himself with the unremitting attempt of different writing styles. Accordingly, his works can be classified into three major writing stages: the avant-garde short story, narrative novel and musical essay. Standing distinctively out from other works, *To Live* signifies the sharp turning of Yu Hua's writing style from avant-garde experimenting to the mature novel narrating. By virtue of its unique narrating style and profound theme, *To Live* has aroused huge sensation followed by the passionate study on the novel. The studies are conducted from various perspectives, ranging from its simple narrating style, black humor, musical narrating, to the "life-death" theme, and the implication of pessimism.

The moment the English Version *To Live* translated by the American scholar Michael Berry made its appearance in 2003, it became a hot seller abroad, winning generous appreciation from the American readers from all walks of life. Compared with the study conducted on the original text, the analysis of the English version is relatively few and limited, let alone the studies on its C-E translation. Driven by the natural attraction to the original novel as a reader and the intense interest in the translated version as an English major, the author has made a detailed comparison between the two. To a large extent, the original information, connotation and cultural background as well as narrating characteristics are conveyed into the TT (target text), and yet inappropriate translation, misunderstandings and even mistakes can also be found in the TT with a second glance, which will inevitably stand as a barrier for the target readers to fully appreciate the beauty of the ST (source text).

Based on the close comparison of the original novel and the translated version, this thesis makes a detailed case study from the perspective of metafunction theory, finding out the merits and demerits of the C-E translation and their underlying causes. The thesis here is by no means to challenge the efforts and expertise of the translator, but intends to make its own contribution to the improvement on the translation of this novel and the other works of Yu Hua as a whole.

II. METAFUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS OF THE C-E TRANSLATION OF *TO LIVE*

2.1.1 The Ideational Function Analysis of the C-E Translation of *To Live*

The sweeping recognition of Michael Berry's translated version *To Live* is largely attributed to its faithful conveyance of the original information from the ST to the TT. The ideational function could be used as an important parameter to measure the translation's faithfulness to the ST, which is mainly realized by the transitivity system. The following three cases will make a detailed analysis on the main elements of transitivity — the process, the participant and the circumstantial elements, so as to illustrate whether the translated version has done a great job in the ideational transform.

(1) 家珍一直扑到天黑，我怕夜露伤着她，硬把她背到身后，家珍让我带她到村口去看看，到了村口，我的衣领都湿透了，家珍哭着说：

“有庆不会在这条路上跑来了。” (Yu, 2004, p. 133)

TT: Jiazhen stayed there until dark. I was afraid the night dew would make her sick, so I picked her up and put her on my back. Jiazhen had me take her over to the edge of the village. By the time we got there my collar was soaked.

“Youqing won't be able to run down this trail to school anymore,” Jiazhen said, crying. (Yu, 2003, p. 161)

The sentence “我怕夜露伤着她，硬把她背到身后” embodies a “cause-effect” relationship which could be equally found in the translated structure “I was afraid...so I...”. And yet the process in the ST “硬把她背到身后” has been recomposed by the translator on purpose.

Process: 背到 (material process)

Participant: 我 (actor), 她(goal)

Circumstance: 硬是 (manner), 身后 (place)

In comparison, it has been made into two processes in the translated version:

Process 1: pick up (material process)

Participant: I (actor), her (goal)

Process 2: put (material process)

Participant: I (actor), her (goal)

Circumstance: on my back (place)

In the original text, the writer combines the two actions “pick her up” and “put her on my back” into “背到身后” unconsciously as it is easier for the Chinese readers to understand the underlying logical relationship. As far as the precise English considered, it is barely possible for the western readers to accept. The decomposed action makes the translated version coherent and clear. Hence, it is fair to say the process transfer has brought the equivalent ideational information to the target reader. But the manner “硬是” which has secretly expressed the narrator's consideration to his fragile wife fails to find the corresponding expression in the TT.

In the translation of the following sentence “有庆不会在这条路上跑来了”, the ST and TT show evident difference in the way of ideational transference.

Process: 跑 (behavior process)

Participate: 有庆 (behavior)

Circumstance: 来 (direction), 这条路上 (place)

By contrast, the translated version shifts the process as:

Process: run (behavior process)

Participate: Youqing (behavior)

Circumstance: down to (direction), this trail (place), school (destination)

Instead of describing directly the huge sorrow a mother indulged in under such circumstances, the writer leaves a psychological space for the readers to fulfill by their own imagination. Given the previous context, Youqing used to take this trail to school. Standing on the edge of the village towards which the trail extends, the mother is filled with sadness as her own son won't be able to run down this trail anymore, neither to school as usual nor to her arms right now. The translators' supplement of “down to school” restricts the connotation kept in the ST, leaving the target readers less room to involve in the scenario reproduction.

(2) 我爹和我，是远近闻名的阔老爷和阔少爷，我们走路时鞋子的声响，都像是铜钱碰来撞去的。(Yu, 2004, p. 7)

TT: Near and far, my father and I were known as the old and young rich masters. When we walked, the sound our shoes made was like the sound of coins clanking against each other. (Yu, 2003, p. 10)

(3) 里面有个胖胖的妓女很招我喜爱，她走路时两片大屁股就像挂在楼前的两只灯笼，晃来晃去。(Yu, 2004, p. 10-11)

TT: There was a fat prostitute there who really won my affection. When she walked, her fat butt was just like the two lanterns that hung outside, shaking from side to side. (Yu, 2003, p. 14)

(4) 我啊.....那件绸衣我往身上一穿就感觉脱下来，那个难受啊，滑溜溜的像是穿上了鼻涕做的衣服。(Yu, 2004, p. 42)

TT: Me, I felt bad...but as soon as I put on that silk shirt, I took it right off. That slimy, uncomfortable feeling was unbearable. It felt like I was wearing clothes made of snot. (Yu, 2003, p. 51)

(5) 那声音响的就跟人跳进池塘似的，一巴掌全打在我心上。(Yu, 2004, p. 115)

TT: The sound of the slap went straight to my heart; it was like the sound of someone diving into a pond. (Yu, 2003, p. 140)

In above cases, the typical Chinese simile structure “像” in the ST may find its equivalent pattern “like” in the TT while the processes in the ST are all kept near the same with the ST. What's more, the special and unique Participant (Identifier) like “铜钱”, “灯笼”, “鼻涕”and “池塘”are with high aesthetic value of Yu Hua's personal characteristic, towards which even the Chinese readers are unfamiliar with. Berry keeps the similes like “coin”, “lantern”, “snot” and

“pond” in the translation, will not only make the target readers feel equally refreshed, but also maintain the exotic flavor intact in the TT. Translated in such a way, the TT has successfully conveyed the ideational information displaying the translator’s respect for the Chinese culture and his appreciation of the original author.

Besides the process transitivity transference, the ideational function could also be used as the benchmark to evaluate whether the translator has accurately grasped the connotation of the original sentences.

(6) 家珍怀着有庆有六个月了，自然有些难看……我嫌弃她，对她说：

“你呀，风一吹肚子就要大上一圈。”

家珍从来不顶撞我，听了这糟蹋她的话，她心里不乐意也只是轻轻说一句：“又不是风吹大的。” (Yu, 2004, p. 9-10)

TT: Because she was six months pregnant with our son, Youqing, Jiazhen was naturally no treat for the eyes. When she walked ... I remember being so annoyed by her appearance that I even said to her, “Look at you. As soon as the wind blows your stomach doubles in size.”

Jiazhen would never contradict me. But after hearing me insult her, she couldn’t have been very happy and quietly retorted, “The wind didn’t blow that hard.” (Yu, 2003, p. 12)

Years later, when the old man Fugui recalls his younger days squandering his love and the family’s fortune, he is indulged in the endless regret, which is especially true when he talks about his pathetic wife. Pregnant with his child, what the wife receives is not the consideration but the heartless irony from her husband by saying “As soon as the wind blows your stomach doubles in size”. In normal cases, the comment will inevitably arouse a fierce conflict between the couple. Given the context, Jiazhen is such a docile and thoughtful wife that even with the compliant inside, she still turns to a gentle way to retort. On one hand, “又不是风吹大的” manifests the fact it is not the wind but Fugui’s responsibility for her pregnancy; On the other hand, “又不是”, a typical colloquial tone in Chinese, is commonly used to express one’s feeling in a skillful and nifty way. Such as, “别埋怨他了，又不是故意的”; “别着急，又不是只有这一家店卖。”

Instead of adopting the literal translation, Berry converts it as “The wind didn’t blow that hard” based on his understanding of the context. The later reveals the fact that the wind wouldn’t be able to blow that hard so as to make “me” pregnant. At the same time, the colloquial tone has also been skillfully transformed into the western humor. Suppose Berry translates the ST as “It is not the wind that blew that big”, it won’t affect the target readers to understand the semantic meaning, but not in line with the Jiazhen’s personality embodied in the context. The humorous way of saying “The wind didn’t blow that hard” is bound to leave an equivalent impression on the target readers of Jiazhen’s obedient and nice quality. Moreover, the ideational function must play its role as the first and foremost carrier of the other two functions.

2.1.2 Discussion and Summary

The first case makes a detailed analysis of the transitivity transference in the English version *To Live*. Although the processes in the translated version are sometimes different from those in the ST, their ideational meanings are accordingly conveyed to a large extent. In this sense, when the quality of translation is assessed, the change in process type does not necessarily matter. It is also worth mentioning that the Participants embodied with the writer’s unique similes have been well kept in the TT. Berry has also made a positive attempt to understand the connotation of the ST integrated with the context and make skillful transformation in the translating process. The long-term study on Chinese enables him to notice the difference of the two languages while trying his best to bridge the gap between them.

Meanwhile, the translated version strays away from the original ideational meaning sometimes; either due to the translator’s misunderstanding of the connotation or his flexible interpretation. Such flexibility may be attributed to Berry’s translation views that “if you translate something too literally, no one will read it”. Undoubtedly, the translator should take the readability and acceptability of the text for the target readers into consideration since translation is considered as a communicative process after all. As Nord (2001) noted once, “in both the source and target situations, the comprehension of the text world depends on the cultural background and the world knowledge of the receiver.” (p.88) However important it is, the flexibility is supposed to be based on the faithful conveyance of the original information in the ST. As Berry confesses there is also the challenge of putting too much of himself into the book. The above analysis proves the translator indeed crosses the line at times, which will be bound to mislead the target readers. Besides, his misunderstanding of certain Chinese words also fails to transfer the ideational meaning appropriately.

Generally speaking, an objective attitude needs to be adopted in the analysis of the C-E translation of *To Live*. As far as the ideational function concerned, Berry has done a good job to a large extent in both the process transitivity and connotation transference by virtue of his proficiency in Chinese. The existing problems, which are caused by the translator’s misunderstanding of the ST or his flexible interpretation, can’t be overlooked. The faithful conveyance of the ideational information should be regarded as the prerequisite for the flexible transformation while taking the readability and acceptability of the text for the target readers into full consideration. Both the misinterpretation and errors existing in the TT show there is still some room left for future improvement.

2.2.1 The Interpersonal Function Analysis of the C-E Translation of *To Live*

The literary text demands particularly the weighing of different metafunctions in translation. In light of novel translation, the transference of interpersonal function takes higher priority than the other metafunctions as well. The

interpersonal function is mainly realized by the mood system and the modality system.

(7) “我只有一个儿子，求你行行好，救活他吧。”

医生点点头，表示知道了，可他又说：

“你为什么只生一个儿子？”

这叫我怎么回答呢？我急了，问他“我儿子还活着吗？”

他摇摇头说：“死了。” (Yu, 2004, p.126)

TT: Standing there trembling, I said, “I only have one son. I beg you, please, save my son.”

The doctor nodded his head to let me know that he understood, but then he asked, “How come you only had one son?” How was I supposed to answer this? I got anxious and asked him, “Is my son still alive?” He shook his head and said, “He’s dead.” (Yu, 2003, p. 153)

Hearing his son dying, Fugui rushes to the hospital hastily begging the doctor to save his only son. Facing the anxious father, in normal cases, the doctor would comfort them by promising they will try their best. The doctor, however, brings up a weird question “你为什么只生一个儿子？” It is by no means a simple interrogative sentence out of the doctor’s personal curiosity intending to figure out the reason why Fugui only has one son. Instead, it is an subtle hint telling the serious situation the boy is in as well as the high possibility that Fugui is due to lose his only son. The unusual questions will inevitably double Fugui’s anxiety.

It is the translator’s profound understanding of the integrated context and interpersonal relationship that drives him to diverse the mood of special question in the ST into a disjunctive question in the TT. Grammatically speaking, “你为什么只生一个儿子？” is supposed to be translated literally as “Why did you only have one son?” Given the above context analysis, such mood of special question fails to show us an awkward situation while it is hard to arouse the father’s anxious response accordingly. By contrast, the translated version “How come you only had one son?” has adopted the doctor’s unusual manner to raise his question, implying the death fate of the poor boy. It may equally arouse the target readers’ scare about what will happen to the poor child next, and by doing so the interpersonal relationship has been successfully transferred into the TT.

Apart from the mood system, the modality system also plays an important role in the interpersonal transference. The following two cases will discuss the quality of the C-E translation of *To Live* with the yardstick of modality system.

(8) 我站起来，拿着本线装的《千字文》，对私塾先生说：

“好好听着，爹给你念一段。”

年过花甲的私塾先生对我爹说：

“你家少爷长大了准能当个二流子。” (Yu, 2004, p.8)

TT: I stood up, holding my string-bound edition of “The Thousand Word Essay,” and announced to my teacher... The next time he saw my father, my teacher, who was really getting on in years, was told him, “I guarantee you that when that son of yours growing up, he’ll be nothing but trouble.” (Yu, 2003, p. 10)

Back to his younger days, Fugui is truly like a bastard with a cynical attitude showing no respect for anyone whoever he is. When required to read the “The Thousand Word Essay”, he dares to humiliate his teacher in public by shouting “Listen good now! Daddy’s going to read to you!” Given the honorable position a teacher enjoys at that time, which is especially true when they are “getting on in years”, it is imaginable how embarrassed and indignant the teacher becomes in such a circumstance. But when talking with Fugui’s father, the teacher doesn’t show his anger abruptly but expresses the disappointment resignedly in a gentle way. “准能” suggests a high probability of Fugui’s ruined future if he goes on like this, no matter they want it or not. The modality in the ST is adopted based on the tenor integrated in the context. On one hand, no matter how offended the teacher is, he will still maintain his “esteem” as a scholar who will definitely show his tolerance towards the students’ brutal behaviors especially in front of their parents. On the other hand, the person the teacher speaks to is of very high social status, “the moment the workers saw Dad strolling around his land, they would hold their hoes with both hands and respectfully call out Master. When he went into the city, all the city people would call him Sir” (Yu, 2003, p.9).

By comparison, the particular tenor in the ST is overlooked in the C-E translation. The English version only conveys the literal meaning of the underlined expression without taking the embedded modality system into consideration. A Subject is intentionally added in the sentence “I guarantee you”, revealing it is the teacher’s subjective inclination to ensure Fugui’s father how terrible his son is going to be, which varies evidently from the objective description in the ST. “He will be nothing but trouble” raises the high possibility in the ST up to one-hundred-percent certainty. Both the probability and inclination have been mis-conveyed in the TT judging from the perspective of modality, leading to the failed transference of the interpersonal meaning.

Even though the above example displays the translator’s failure in absorbing Chinese culture in the C-E translation, it doesn’t mean he doesn’t make an active effort in the spreading of Chinese culture to the west, which can be highly summarized from his following translation of culture-loaded expressions.

(9) 队长陪着城里请来的风水先生在村里转悠开了，说是要找一块风水宝地煮钢铁。(Yu, 2004, p.87)

TT: The team leader accompanied the town *fengshui* expert on a leisurely stroll around the village. He wanted to find an ideal spot with perfect *fengshui* to smelt iron. (Annotation: *Fengshui*, also known as geomancy, is the Chinese art of

determining the geographic location of a house ...) (Yu, 2003, p.105)

(10) 村里人下地干活开始记工分了，我算是个壮汉…… (Yu, 2004, p. 99)

TT: When the other villagers went down to the fields to work, they started to keep track of work points. (Annotation: A unit indicating the quantity and quality of labor performed and the amount ...) (Yu, 2003, p. 120)

(11) 城里的文化大革命是越闹越凶，满街都是大字报……凤霞他们的枕巾上印着：千万不要忘记阶级斗争。(Yu, 2004, p. 158)

TT: Meanwhile, the Cultural Revolution was raging more and more intensely in town. All the streets were filled with big character posters... and printed on Fengxia's pillowcase was "Never Forget Class Struggle." (Annotation: Big character paper, or da zi bao, are large posters...) (Yu, 2003, p. 192)

(12) 她看看队长，对我们大伙喊：“那走资派有没有？” (Yu, 2004, p.159)

TT: Keeping an eye on the team leader, the girl yelled at us, "Then are there any capitalist roaders?" (Yu, 2003, p. 194)

In above cases Berry adopts the literal translation plus annotation strategy dealing with culture-loaded words like “风水”，“工分”，“大字报”，and “阶级斗争”，without any personal evaluation or comments affiliated. The connotations of those words are embedded in the unique Chinese culture and national conditions in certain historical backgrounds, which is beyond the cognitive framework of the foreign readers. But given the translation time of the novel in 2003, both the translator and the target readers are exposed to a more inclusive sociocultural environment, making it possible for them to get insight into the Chinese culture and history judging from their own perspectives. The relative foreignization strategy may not largely impede the interpersonal transference while providing an objective platform for the target readers who is interested in the underlying cultural factors to find more references besides the novel.

2.2.2 Discussion and Summary

Berry has managed to convey the interpersonal relationship and the protagonist's personality into the TT from the angle of mood system transference, even though minor problems exist in the process. The translator's skillful transformation of the modality system could also be found in the handling of the same Chinese expression “谁知(道)”. The grasp of the interpersonal meaning of the ST lies in the translator's universal sympathy towards the Chinese people. The original author Yu Hua (Yu, 2003, p.249) once shares his view on the common feeling of humans, “Human experience, combined with the power of the imagination and understanding, can break down all barriers, enabling a person truly to understand that thing called fate at work in his life...Perhaps this is what makes literature magical.” His point is confirmed by the translator, “Beyond the violence and blood that seem to haunt Fugui, Xu Sanguan and so many other inhabitants of Yu Hua's fictional universe, there lies a sensitivity and humanity that speaks to us all” (Yu, 2003, p.244).

The examples given make an objective analysis of the C-E translation by taking the modality system as benchmark. Even though the translator's shortcoming in the full understanding of Chinese culture indeed exist in the C-E translation, it is fair to say that he makes an active effort in the cultural communication and expression. Berry regards it as his responsibility to introduce Chinese Culture to western readers. Susan Bassnett, an English theorist on translation, once compared language as the heart of the body of culture. She remarked: “As People cannot neglect other parts of the body, when doing the surgery, we cannot take the risk of separating language from culture, when doing translation” (Bao, 2001, p.12). Since China is playing a greater role in the world, lots of foreigners have changed the stereotype in mind, eager to appreciate the magnificent Chinese culture from an objective perspective. Sun Zhili (2002) once pointed out that “the Chinese literary translation in the 21st century will be foreignization-oriented.” (p.22-24)

2.3.1 The Textual Function Analysis of the C-E Translation of To Live

As the intrinsic function of language, the text plays a fundamental role in the combination of ideational and interpersonal functions. Whether the translated version has equally displayed the original language characteristics serves as a vital criterion for assessing the textual function transference.

(13) 他的歌声在空旷的傍晚像风一样飘扬，老人唱到——
少年去游荡，中年想掘藏，老年做和尚。(Yu, 2004, p. 194)

TT: The old man sang:

In my younger days I wandered amuck,
At middle age I wanted to stash everything I a trunk,
And now that I'm old I've become a monk. (Yu, 2003, p.235)

In his young age, the narrator picks up the habit of wandering in the countryside to collect folk songs. Folk songs develop in a brief manner, easy to catch and full of the farmers' inornate wisdom. In this case, three short clauses in coordinate structure summarize the distinctive status in three major stages of a man's entire life. As far as the linguistic characteristic concerned, the ST develops in an antithesis way with the plump “ang” as rhyme, making it easier for people to catch. While the marked themes “少年”，“中年” and “老年” signifies different life stages, the Rhemes “去游荡”，“想觉藏” and “做和尚” are the key information emphasized in the end. The absence of the subject will not cause any reading impediments to the Chinese reader; besides, it goes more like a universal truth applicable to anyone.

In comparison, the language structure and feature are both kept intact in the TT by the translator's skillful transformation as follows: the original rhyme is carried by the vowel pronunciation of “amuck”，“trunk” and “monk”;

the three antithesis sentences are rendered into the coordinate structure— preposition phrases followed by the subject-predicate clauses; three marked themes are changed into the preposition phrase leading the whole sentence; the invisible subject is visualized by “I”; the Rhemes are equally emphasized by the predicate- object structure in the end. In addition, the information and logic system in the ST are fully conveyed in the TT as well.

(14) 过一会儿，爹说道，“从前，我们徐家的老祖宗不过是养了一只小鸡，鸡养大后变成了鹅，鹅养大了变成了羊，再把羊养大，羊就变成了牛。我们徐家就是这样发起来的。” (Yu, 2004, p. 29)

.....我常想起我爹在世时说的话，便一遍一遍去对苦根说：“这两只鸡养大了变成鹅，鹅养大了变成羊，养大了又变成牛。我们啊，也就越来越有钱啦。” (Yu, 2004, p. 187)

TT: After a while he continued, “A long time ago, our Xu family ancestors raised but a single chicken. When that chicken grew up it turned into a goose, the goose in turn grew into a lamb, and the lamb became an ox. This is how our family became rich.” (Yu, 2003, p. 36)

...I would always repeat those words to Kugen. “When these chickens grow up they’ll become geese, and when the geese grow up they’ll become lambs. When the lambs grow up they’ll turn into oxen. And us, we’ll get richer and richer.” (Yu, 2003, p. 226-227)

The ST readers are probably impressed by the above fable since it has been repeated for several times. By using metaphor initiated in the ordinary life, the story embodies the wisdom about the growth of a wealthy family, which are passed down from one generation to the next, inspiring the posterity to carry forward in prosperity and to struggle back in hardships. The ST is featured with repetition which, rhetorically speaking constitutes a major strategy for producing emphasis, clarity, amplification or emotional effect. The repetition can be found both in the repeated use of the metaphors within a sentence and the repeated occurrence of the same story, providing the novel with strong artistic appeal. Therefore, how to convey the life philosophy in its original form raises a tough question for the translator. From the English version we may infer that Berry retains the repetition in the TT, either that of the metaphoric images or that of the same family story. What’s more, even the sentence structures are equally reproduced. As a native English speaker, Berry is undoubtedly clear about that the English readers are accustomed to highly-structured logical thinking and sentence patterns. But he is still willing to make target readers exposed to the author’s unique writing style and the special expressive way of Chinese wisdom.

(15) 家珍被拖出去时，双手紧紧捂着凸起的肚子，那里面有我的儿子啊，家珍没喊没叫.....她一个人慢慢往回走。后来我问她，她那时是不是恨死我了，她摇摇头说：

“没有。”

我的女人抹着眼泪走到她爹米行门口，站了很长..... (Yu, 2004, p. 19)

TT: As Jiazhen carried out, her hands firmly clasped her protruding belly, which held my son... She slowly made her way home. Years later, When I looked back on that incident, I asked Jiazhen weather she hated me back then. She shook her head, “No.” (Yu, 2003, p. 24)

Wiping the tears from her face, my wife passed the entrance ... (Yu, 2003, p. 24)

The novel mainly goes in the manner of flashback by the protagonist Fugui. Recalling the past life he has gone through, Fugui describes the story completely in a peaceful mood. When talking about his younger days as a compulsive gambler, what Fugui reviews is not only how incontinent he is in front of the surrounding temptation but also how unmerciful he is to his faithful wife. Filled with deep remorse, Fugui inserts the later conversation with his wife in the recall of the story. “后来” constitutes a significant mark of prenarration, implying the following things happen later than the background story. After a short prenarration about Jiazhen’s attitude towards him, Fugui goes on with the former story telling. Such prenarration reveals Fugui’s endless regret for being so flagitious before, which also reflects the generous love from his wife.

In the C-E translation, if the prenarration is literally translated as “later, I asked Jiazhen”, it is bound to make the target readers confused about the narration logic, even though the disturbed time narration in the ST does not have the slightest difficulty for the Chinese reader to comprehend, given the life experience and thinking pattern they have accustomed to. The invisibility of the specific behavior description of “looking back on the accident years later” lies in the common cognitive background shared by the ST readers. Perceived by such particularity, the translator interpreted the time marker “后来” as “Years later, when I looked back on that accident”, making the implied time logic clear to the target readers. So it is the master of different thinking modes between the east and the west that drives the translator to adopt the free translation strategy here, making sure the accurate transference of the implicit time logic embedded in the ST into the TT.

From the above two cases we may infer the translator has succeeded in the conveyance of the textual meaning in light of the disturbed time narration. As mentioned above, while the logic of a Chinese sentence often appears so implicit that it has to be comprehended through the semantic meaning, the English language always relies on the syntax itself to show the logical relationship clearly. So sometimes it is necessary for the translator to adopt the reconstruction strategy in the C-E translation. The following case will make a detailed analysis in this regard.

The life experience and thinking pattern of Chinese readers guarantee them to fully understand the inner cohesiveness in the ST. However, if the former syntactic structure is kept the same in the TT, it will undoubtedly make the target readers feel unstructured and illogical, difficult to view the connection of actions as a cohesive one, let alone

the underlying emotional factors. Regarding the literature translation, the visualizing phenomenon occurs frequently in the translated version, that is, the translator visualizes the implicit logic relationship in the ST on purpose so as to increase the acceptability of the translated version to target readers indulged in the different cultural and social context, which also in turn has large to do with the translation style of the translator (Yuan, 2011, p.105). Given the above analysis, the substantial reproduction of the TT has done a great job in the transference of the textual meaning of the ST.

2.3.2 Discussion and Summary

In the C-E translation, it is the very first step for the translator to grasp the textual meaning of the ST accurately. Firstly, as the space-time manipulator, the author sets the narrating cycle as the fundamental structure for the novel. The narration mainly unfolds in flashback whose aesthetic value is obvious. Otherwise, if the narration goes on in line with the natural story time, then *To Live* is simply a story full of disasters. And yet, as shown in case (15), it is the mixed use of flashback and prenarration that makes the shuttle of time framework from the past to the present possible. The spatial-temporal switch disturbs the natural story time, taking the readers to the past and bringing them back skillfully. In the switch process, the narration space is considerably enlarged, exciting the readers' interest while getting them involved in the textual meaning creation. Secondly, repetition constitutes an important tool for the author to conduct the story narration and the figure character. As a notable phenomenon in Yu Hua's novels, repetition has long invited considerable controversy among the criticism cycle. Ge Fei (2002) remarked, "In my view, it is a huge mistake to judge a writer by dividing the content and form in his expression because whatever the content is, it will generate the corresponding form required." (p.139) As far as *To Live* considered, repetition plays a vital role in the textual transference. What the plain repeated narration like in the case (14) manifests is a strong and musical melody. The unique repeating narration style has earned Yu Hua the reputation of "repeating poetics". In addition, the aesthetic value of the novel can also be traced to its narrating rhythm and musical tune, which have large to do with the author's indulgence in the classical music.

III. CONCLUSION

As one of the major contemporary novelists, Yu Hua has been continuously challenging himself with the attempt of different writing styles. Deeply impressed by the rich content, unique narrating style and profound theme by the novel itself, the American scholar Michael Berry determines to bring its original flavor in front of the foreign readers. The English version, thanks to Berry's tremendous efforts, made its final publication in 2003, and turned to be an immediate bestseller.

The faithful conveyance of the ideational information raises a high demand for the translator to comprehend the source text accurately. Seeing from this perspective, an objective attitude needs to be adopted to evaluate the translated version. Although it has conveyed the process transitivity to a large extent, the English version strays away from the original ideational meaning sometimes due to the misunderstanding of the inner connotation of certain Chinese sentences. The over-interpretation turns out to jeopardize the original ideational meaning. So it is justified to say that there is still some room left for future improvement in this regard.

The interpersonal function of language always takes a higher priority in the literary works, which is especially true when the source text falls into a novel like *To Live*. Even though minor problems exist in the translation process, the mood system has managed to convey the interpersonal relationship and the protagonist's characteristics into the English version, which also largely reveals Berry's universal sympathy towards the Chinese working masses. With regard to the modality system transference, the translator's deficiency in his comprehension of the Chinese cultural philosophy shows evidently. Taking cultural communication as his own responsibility, Berry makes an active effort in the translation process which could be easily seen from his literary strategy towards the culture-loaded words. Considering the complexity of the interpersonal meaning embodied in a novel, the misunderstanding may occur inevitably once in a while, but it deserves our attention for future improvement.

As the intrinsic function of language, textual meaning embodies the unique narrating style and language characteristic of the original novel, injecting it with high aesthetic values. Given the difference between the two languages' syntactic rules and between the users' respective thinking patterns, the textual function transference is by no means an easy task. However, the above detailed analysis witnesses that Berry has done a great job in this part, which can be attributed to several factors. The foremost reason lies in the fact that Berry has perceived the textual meaning of the source style accurately, including the disturbed narration time, the unique language characteristics such as repetition and musical tune. In addition, taking the advantage of being a native English speaker, Berry has succeeded in visualizing the implicit logic and coherence embedded in the source text through skillful conversion or reconstruction, making it acceptable for the target readers accustomed to the logical thinking and structured syntax. It also has large to do with Berry's respect for the original author.

Generally speaking, generous recognition should be given to Michael Berry, whose tremendous efforts make it possible for the foreigners to appreciate the beauty of the original novel. The translated version, as the only English version published just in 2003, still waits for the test of the target readers from all walks of life. By no means to challenge the expertise of the translator, this thesis makes an objective study on the translated version, intending to provide constructive reference for the comprehensive assessment of Berry's version and the improvement of future translation.

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