



A Dialectical Study on Translatability and Untranslatability

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Abstract

In the process of code-switching, information asymmetry between the translated text and the original text is an objective reality. This is caused by the uncertainty of the meaning of the words in the translated material on which the translation is based, the differences in the paradigms and cultures of the two languages, and the subjective initiative of the translator. Untranslatability presupposes linguistic uniqueness and implies the denial of correspondence between different languages in terms of expressions, ways of thinking, mental qualities, and other factors. The claim of translatability presupposes the affirmation of these correspondences. The apparent opposition between untranslatability and translatability obscures the fact that the two are concerned with different aspects of language and culture, and that the relationship between them is dialectically complementary. This paper summarizes the research and debates on translatability and untranslatability both at home and abroad, sorts out the theoretical basis of translatability and untranslatability, and then elaborates the main factors affecting translatability and untranslatability. On this basis, the dialectical complementary relationship between translatability and untranslatability is analyzed with examples, and finally, the implications of this study for translation teaching are summarized.

Subject Areas

Linguistics, Translation

Keywords

Translatability, Untranslatability, Theoretical Basis, Dialectical Relationship

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

In the thousands of years of translation history in both China and foreign

countries, many translation theorists have summarized translation experience, described the process of translation, revealed the essence of translation, elaborated the pros and cons of translation, and explored the laws of translation from different viewpoints and perspectives. Different definitions, modes and schools of translation have been formed. They have put forward many wonderful theories or paradoxes that complement each other or go against each other, among which translatability and untranslatability are a pair of ancient antinomy propositions. There are many scholars at home and abroad who support the thesis of untranslatability through the history. Dante was the first to offer the idea of untranslatability of literature, a view echoed by philosophers of the Enlightenment. In the late 18th century, the famous German linguist Wilhelm Humboldt (1767-1835) believed that there was no way to find a compromise between the translation and the faithfulness to the original. The assertion of untranslatability is also common in the history of translation in China. Kumarajiva first proposed the idea of “loss of taste” in translation. In modern times, there were still many translators who had reservations about the issue of translatability. However, from the history of translation in China and abroad for thousands of years, most translation practitioners and theorists have rejected the theory of untranslatability and believed that it originated from the agnosticism of idealism. For example, in ancient China, the translation of Buddhist scriptures was a significant translation activity. When the Lotus Sutra was translated into Chinese, translators not only strived to preserve the original religious meaning but also adjusted the text according to Chinese expression. For example, early translators like Kumarajiva meticulously translated the Lotus Sutra, allowing it to have a profound impact on Chinese readers. This demonstrates that translators can overcome language barriers through creative adjustments and interpretations, rather than accepting the theory of untranslatability. At the same time, since modern times, many translation theorists have believed that translatability and untranslatability are the unity of opposites for contradiction. The French philosopher Derrida introduced the concept of “la différence,” who believed that translation practitioners can achieve the symbiosis of two languages, two cultures and two texts by protecting differences. All these ideas contribute to the dialectical study of translatability and untranslatability.

1.2. Significance and Purpose of the Study

In the process of code-switching, information asymmetry between the translated text and the original text is an objective reality. This is caused by the uncertainty of the meaning of words in the translated material on which the translation is based, the differences in the paradigms and cultures of the two languages, and the subjective initiative of the translator. Untranslatability presupposes linguistic uniqueness and implies the negation of the correspondence between different languages in terms of expressions, ways of thinking, spiritual qualities and other factors. The claim of translatability is predicated on the affirmation of the above correspondence. The apparent opposition between untranslatability and translatability

observes the fact that the two are concerned with different aspects of language and culture, and that the relationship between them is dialectically complementary.

Therefore, this thesis has two purposes. The first purpose is to focus on the theoretical basis of translatability and untranslatability, and outline the main factors that affect them. Secondly, a dialectical analysis of the contradictory relationship between translatability and untranslatability is also conducted.

1.3. Structure of the Paper

This paper is composed of five chapters. Chapter one is the introduction. It introduces the background of the study related to this selection, the purpose of the study and the structural arrangement of the thesis. Chapter two is a literature review. It defines the relevant terms, including translatability, untranslatability and dialectical relationship, and reviews the current status of relevant domestic and international research. Chapter three describes the theoretical basis of translatability and untranslatability and their main influencing factors. Chapter four analyzes the dialectical complementary relationship between translatability and untranslatability with examples. Chapter five is a conclusion. It provides a general summary of the whole text and explains the research shortcomings of this thesis and the implications of this study for foreign language learning and translation.

2. Literature Review

Translatability and untranslatability refer to the degree of exactness of the translation, not to the general issue of whether the two languages can be translated into each other. In this chapter, we'll talk about the definition of translatability and untranslatability, and then focus on the relevant research both at home and abroad.

2.1. Definition of Translatability and Untranslatability

Translatability and untranslatability are relative concepts, not absolute concepts, and they are dialectical relations of the unity of opposites. Both situations exist in the same text, and they both embody the basic functions of language and are subject to change and development.

The issue of translatability is a fundamental issue in translation theory. The core of this question is whether the spiritual and ideological content of a work expressed in one language can be completely and exactly reproduced in another language. This issue includes both translatability and untranslatability. To be more specifically, the issue of translatability and untranslatability is not a general question of whether the two languages can be translated into each other, but a question of the degree of accuracy that can be achieved in the translation of certain works with strong emotional and artistic colors and cultural characteristics due to the difference in language [1]. In other words, it refers to how much of the meaning and characteristics of the original text are left out and how much is reproduced in the translation. The degree of untranslatability is higher and the degree of

translatability is lower if more is omitted and less is reproduced. And the former is lower and the latter is higher if there is less omission and more reproduction.

2.2. The Research on Translatability and Untranslatability at Home

At present, China is vigorously promoting Chinese culture to go global, improving the national cultural soft power, and enhancing our international status and international influence. Therefore, translators have an important historical mission in translating Chinese cultural texts. However, it is by no means an easy task to promote and spread the most basic cultural genes of the Chinese nation in the process of translation. The source culture and the translated culture are not absolutely equivalent at all times, because some of them cover very different connotations in spite of the same denotation. Therefore, many famous linguists and translators in China have different opinions and discourses on the translatability and untranslatability of languages [2].

In the early 1980s, the structuralism model of translation was the mainstream of the translation community in China. The structuralism view of translation considers the typical dichotomy of synchronic and diachronic, partial and integral, sense and reference, langue and parole. The translator should follow the author's lead and try to reproduce the author's original meaning, and the humanities and social sciences can be as precise and scientific as the natural sciences. Fu Qiaoyu points out that in the mid-1990s, deconstructionism became popular in the domestic translation, introducing the strategy of alienation in the translation process, preserving textual differences, which can protect Chinese culture from the erosion of Western culture, and enabling the promotion of Chinese culture [3].

According to Wang Bin, translation researchers should pay attention to the analysis of language structure, which he believes will help researchers keep a clear mind and remove any metaphysical assumptions [4]. In contrast, Tang Shuzong argues that those who hold the view of untranslatability are often not positivists, and that what is untranslatable is only temporarily untranslatable or untranslatable to some people, but as people's cognitive ability improves, what was not known in the past is now known, and what was untranslatable in the past is gradually translatable, so language is basically translatable [5].

Jin Jinghong, on the other hand, reinterprets untranslatability from a viewpoint of deconstructionism, arguing that untranslatability does not mean that the translator cannot translate, but rather that it is impossible to create diversity in the original text under the law of economy, and therefore preserving differences in the translation means protecting the source text [6].

2.3. The Research on Translatability and Untranslatability Abroad

Many linguists and philosophers have expressed different opinions on the translatability and untranslatability of language. At the end of the 18th century, Wilhelm von Humboldt, a famous German linguist, had fully and exhaustively

expounded the view of untranslatability, arguing that any translation is undoubtedly an attempt to accomplish an impossible task, because every translator is bound to hit one of the two reefs and break his head; or to be overly confined to the original to the detriment of the aesthetic habits and language of his own people, or to the detriment of the original work, or to the detriment of the original work by taking too much care of the characteristics of the people. And finding some kind of compromise is not only difficult, but downright impossible (Yang, 2000). At the same time, however, he does not fully support the claim of the untranslatability of language, but likewise provides a reasonable explanation for the existence of translatability, arguing that it is not too much to say that in any language, even in the languages of primitive peoples, which we know little about, anything, including the highest, the lowest, the strongest and the weakest, can be expressed [7].

The British translation theorist Catford has pointed out that meaning is a characteristic of a language, and the source language and the target language cannot have the same meaning originally, nor can translation achieve the transfer of meaning; the formal meanings of the two languages can only correspond, but not be equivalent; and the translation equivalence of the source language and the target language refers to the coincidence of a geranium with the entity to which the text refers. In other words, a perfect match of referring entities is impossible [8]. However, he also points out that translatability is indeed more like a cline than a well-defined dichotomy, which means there is no absolute untranslatability of language.

The French philosopher Derrida proposed the concept of *différance*. In his view, translation is no longer a way to passively translate the meaning, but a way to express the underlying meaning. In other words, the point of translation itself is not to interpret everything in the text. The significance of Derrida's view for translation theory and practice lies in his attempt to propose a solution on how to view and resolve differences while recognizing them [9].

3. Theoretical Basis of Translatability and Untranslatability and Factors Affecting Them

This chapter will sort out the theoretical basis of translatability and untranslatability and explore the three main factors affecting translatability and untranslatability.

3.1. Theoretical Basis

In the long history of translation, the debate on the possibility of translation has never stopped, and translatability and untranslatability are a pair of old dichotomous propositions. As far as the nature of translation is concerned, philosophy and linguistics have reached a consensus that translation is interpretation. Therefore, behind the proposition about translatability and untranslatability, different philosophical views and linguistic views are reflected.

3.1.1. Philosophical Basis

In the history of philosophy, interpretation is both an epistemological and an ontological problem. While the transcendentalist tends to use synchronic linguistics as a research paradigm, the ontological-oriented theorists pay more attention to the historicity of language and the intervention of the speaker in the context [10]. For example, Kant looked for power from a priori category. In short, the question of translation is always linked to the question of power, which refers to the ability or the way of functioning of a logical prior, and the metaphysical and philosophical questions of whether power is limited, in what sense and in what possibility, are ultimately reflected in the dispute over translatability and untranslatability in the translation process.

In the era when the practice of translation was centered on the original text, faithful representation of the author's intentions as expressed in the original text is the purpose of translation. This tenet represents Plato's cognitive pursuit and psychological accumulation, in other words, it reflects the formulation of the word-object relationship, namely the truth-value proposition. The philosophical underpinnings of the translation practices of this era were Hegelian propositions identified with epiphenomenal ideologies, meaning that they believed in the oneness of thought and being and did not subscribe to agnosticism in the Kantian sense.

3.1.2. Linguistic Basis

Linguistics offers additional and more complex perspectives on the interpretation of translatability and untranslatability. Chomsky's Universal Grammar argues that there are many commonalities between the first and second languages, and that the sameness between the three categories of connotation, context, and logic makes translation possible between any two different languages.

Saussure, the father of modern linguistics, proposed the theory of symbolic value, the core idea of which is that any expression always obtains its own distinctive meaning through its opposition to other expressions; the network of relations between expressions constitutes a system, and there is no expression without the system [11]. The symbolic value theory reconstructs the theory of meaning, with the task of tracing the necessary conditions for all existing and future meanings, which are divided into denotation, sense and reference. Translation is defined as a complete transformation of linguistic structures. Because Saussure categorized language into the syntagmatic and the paradigmatic relations, and the interaction of these two types of relations is logically necessary to generate meaning, and hence the difference between languages is actually a difference in the paradigmatic relations. From this perspective, untranslatability concerns in what sense and to what extent contexts and context types are untranslatable.

3.1.3. Summary

In general, the concepts of translatability and untranslatability are based on translatability theory. What matters for the question of translatability and

untranslatability is not whether translation is possible or impossible, but to what extent a specific topic is translatable, or under what circumstances it is untranslatable. In general, the question of limits depends on the function of the language. Therefore, this chapter will further discuss how language factors affect translatability and untranslatability.

3.2. Cognitive Factor

Language has a cognitive expression function, which helps people to cognize the objective world, and in the process of cognition, people can transmit the acquired information through language to express. From the perspective of translation, the object that people use language to know is the objective world, and the object that people use language to express is the knowledge and experience gained in the process of cognizing the objective world. The objective world faced by different peoples is basically the same, moreover, different peoples have more or less the same physiological structure and psychological reactions, therefore, the experience and knowledge acquired by different peoples in the process of cognizing the same objective world must be basically the same, but the difference is that they use different languages in the process of cognition and expression. In other words, the different languages of different peoples carry essentially the same knowledge and experience. In this way, some essentially identical knowledge or experience expressed in one language has a corresponding form of expression in another language. For example, English often uses object expressions, which express how objective things act on human perceptions and present things in an objective tone, while Chinese often uses person expressions, which describe objective things from the self and tend to describe people and their behaviors and states. The cognitive perspective in English is that something happened to someone, while the cognitive perspective in Chinese is that someone experienced something, but the objective facts described in both languages are the same. For example, In English, expressions like “the book was read by him” use a passive voice structure that focuses on the objective fact—the book being read. This type of expression emphasizes the event itself and the state of the book. In contrast, in Chinese, one might say “他读了这本书” (he read the book), which focuses more on the subject—“he”—and his actions. The emphasis here shifts to the person’s actions and experiences. Although the two languages differ in their modes of expression, the core information they convey—that someone reads a book—is the same. It can be said that the cognitive factor in language recognizes the existence of textual translatability.

On the other hand, the objective world faced by different peoples may be partially different, so there are partial differences in the knowledge and experience of different peoples, but based on the cognitive function of language, the language of one person can re-recognize and express the new knowledge and experience that another people already has but is not familiar with. This shows that the cognitive expression of a language is the basis for the possibility of mutual translation between two languages.

3.3. Cultural Factor

Language is not only a constituent part of culture, but also a carrier of culture and an important means of cultural inheritance and transmission [12]. Language is the result of people working together to understand and transform nature to the point where they “have to say something” to each other. The vocabulary and grammar of a language represent the knowledge of the people who speak it about various objective things and their interconnections over millions of years, and are the total repository of the culture of that people. Therefore, every language must have a large number of words for cultural things that are specific to that language group. In the process of translating such words and phrases, since the target language lacks the corresponding linguistic symbols to refer to such specific cultural things, it is necessary to create some symbols to refer to them, but since the created linguistic symbols are not yet recognized by the readers of the target language, the translator often has to take some auxiliary means to add notes in order to make the readers of the target language understand the cultural references. Usually, in the source language, there are several translations of a word after it is translated, which is the result of the untranslatability of words carrying cultural meanings in the language.

This untranslatability, caused by the cultural function of language, is relative. With the development of translation activities and the deepening of cultural exchanges, this untranslatability can be transformed into translatability. Because of the push of usage and the influence of many factors such as society and culture, the language itself is constantly evolving toward economy, conciseness, practicality, inclusiveness, and expressiveness. Therefore, in translation activities, there are often gaps in culturally loaded words, *i.e.*, the target language lacks words that express something in the source language that reflects its unique culture, but such words can gradually enter the target language culture after a process of acceptance, digestion and promotion. For example, the English translation of the Chinese cultural load word “饺子” initially used “dumpling”, which was not fully equivalent in meaning, but with the strengthening of Chinese cultural export and the development of translation activities, the word Jiaozi was incorporated into the English vocabulary, and the translation successfully integrated into the culture of the target language, reflecting the profound influence of language and cultural functions on translatability and untranslatability.

3.4. Aesthetic Factor

Every language has a certain material existence, namely the sound expression and written form of the language. Human beings use the cognitive expression function of language while also actively recognizing, summarizing, and using various material forms of language itself to make the expression of language more imaginative, vivid, and give people a sense of beauty, in order to achieve a certain rhetorical aesthetic effect, such as mountain songs, ballads, poems, jokes, tongue twisters, puns, etc. There is no information transfer channel between the two languages

in terms of surface structure, namely phonology, but only in terms of deep structure, namely meaning. Thus the aesthetic surface elements that represent the basic morphological or rhythmic characteristics of a language are difficult to reproduce in the translation process. From the phonological point of view, Chinese and English are very different, for example, Chinese is a tonal language, and tones have tonal positions, and different tonal positions have different ideational characteristics, which are almost impossible to present in English. In addition, Chinese characters are ideographic and English is epigraphic, and their writing forms are very different, so the written features of the two languages are not translatable. For instance, Chinese poetry often uses rhymes and puns that exploit the tonal nature of the language. For instance, the “ci” poetry (词) by poets like Li Qingzhao involves intricate wordplay that takes advantage of the tonal and homophonic richness of Chinese. The phrase “桃花扇底江南水” (táo huā shàn dǐ jiāng nán shuǐ) can be appreciated for its rhythmic and tonal qualities in Chinese, but when translated, the specific rhyme and tonal effects are lost. English equivalents might capture the meaning but miss the phonological play and rhythmic flow inherent in the original. These examples show how the phonological and orthographic differences between Chinese and English result in varying aesthetic and rhetorical effects. The tonal distinctions in Chinese, the ideographic nature of its writing, and the unique phonological patterns are aspects of language material existence that do not easily translate into English. The translation often focuses on conveying the deep meaning rather than the surface-level phonological or orthographic characteristics.

4. Dialectical Relationship between Translatability and Untranslatability

This chapter will define the dialectical relationship between translatability and untranslatability, and specify this dialectical complementary relationship by listing and analyzing examples of four transformation strategies.

4.1. Definition of Dialectical Relationship

Translatability and untranslatability are a pair of contradictions that exist simultaneously in translation activities, which are the reflection of the commonality between languages and their respective characteristics [13]. The magnitude of translatability or untranslatability depends on the level of translatability. When the degree of translatability is high, the translatability of the language is strong, which means that the untranslatability is weak, and conversely, when the degree of translatability is low, the untranslatability of the language is stronger than the translatability.

The study of the dialectical complementary relationship between translatability and untranslatability is based on the understanding of materialistic dialectics, which means that the world is knowable and that man has the ability to know the world. What is reflected in the language is that the development of society and the

consequent development of human thinking, will continue to promote the development of vocabulary and grammar, so that the language is increasingly rich, perfect and sophisticated. At the same time, with the development of society, the economic, cultural and scientific and technological exchanges between different ethnic groups are becoming closer and closer, which will inevitably lead to mutual contact, collision and influence between languages. The trend of human life is moving toward globalization, and the development of language and writing and the increasing richness of its connotation have made certain relatively untranslatable things gradually gain a certain degree of translatability.

In summary, translatability and untranslatability are not a static result, nor do they exist in a dichotomy. The dialectical complementary relationship between the two means that under certain conditions, untranslatability can be transformed into translatability. In the translation process, translators should uphold the basic concept of recognizing the existence of untranslatability and enhancing the limits of translatability with a positive attitude and effective strategies.

4.2. Semantic Domestication

Semantics refers to the meaning implied by language. The semantic differences reflect the differences in the thinking and culture of the peoples who use different languages, and different peoples have different conventions and habits in semantic expressions, and this inevitably reduces the degree of translatability. Semantic domestication refers to achieving semantic equivalence between the source language and the target language, which requires the translator to look for cultural or thinking symbols that can be equivalent in both languages, thus reducing linguistic untranslatability. An example is the translation of the following Chinese film.

Example 1:

Source language: 我不是潘金莲

Target language: I Am Not Madame Bovary

Pan Jinlian has been synonymous with the term “lecherous woman” in Chinese literature, and Madame Bovary has been accused of being indecent and insulting to religion and morality since its inception, because she is also a woman who falls in love with lust and derives pleasure from cheating, a fate she shares with Pan Jinlian. In other words, the two are equivalent cultural symbols. Therefore, the translation of Pan Jinlian into Madame Bovary is a more intimate image for readers, which improves the acceptability of the translation while preserving the cultural connotation, greatly reducing the untranslatability of the language and increasing the degree of translatability. Here is another example.

Example 2:

Source language: 布衣蔬食

Target language: wear coarse clothes and eat simple food

The Chinese phrase “布衣蔬食” is often used to express the meaning of diligence, frugality and simplicity. But “clothes made of cotton” and “vegetables”

have different connotations in both languages. In the Chinese context, these two words represent frugality, while in the English context, they represent a healthy and affluent lifestyle. If translated directly, it would result in the untranslatability of the implied meaning. Therefore, the translator chooses the symbols of “coarse clothes” and “simple food” to explain the meaning of frugality and simplicity in the source language to the readers of the target language, which is also a manifestation of transforming the untranslatability into translatability.

4.3. Rhetorical Domestication

Rhetorical domestication refers to the fact that the original text itself has a certain rhetoric, and when it is transformed into the target language, the translation should accurately express its meaning while maintaining its rhetorical effect. Language forms different aesthetic effects because of the differences in its surface structure, and the aesthetic representational elements that represent the basic form or rhythmic characteristics of a language are difficult to reproduce in the translation process and have great untranslatability, and here is an example.

Example 3:

Source language: He suggested that a truly-inclusive politically-correct pronoun would be “s/h/it”.

Target language: 他建议，真正既全面又符合政治正确性的代词应是“她”或“他”或“它”。

On the surface, the word “s/h/it” combines “she”, “he” and “it” to refer to all people and things, but the combined pronunciation inevitably reminds the reader of the word “shit” as a metaphor, and in connection with the meaning of the political theme expressed in this sentence, the original text’s derisive and sarcastic meaning of politics leaps off the page. However, the translation can only convey the surface meaning of the original text and cannot convey the deeper meaning of this clever metaphor.

But this untranslatability can be greatly reduced by the translator giving full play to his or her subjective initiative. Here is another example.

Example 4:

Source language: A: Why is river rich?

B: Because it has two banks.

Target language: 甲：为什么说河水富有？

乙：因为它年年有鱼呀。

The word “bank” in the original text is a polysemy, making the language very humorous and witty. The translator adopts the rhetorical domestication method, using “鱼” and “余”, which is a pair of homophonic pun, to express the meaning and reproduce rhetorical effect of the original text. Although this word replaces the meaning of the word “bank” in the original text, the rhetorical effect is the same, and the humorous language style is also retained, which generally achieves both the meaning and the aesthetic effect. It is a successful attempt to transform untranslatability into translatability.

4.4. Alienation Annotation

Because some languages have strong national cultural characteristics, it is difficult to find a linguistic means to reproduce the original text in the translation that matches or corresponds to it in the target language. In an era of increasing emphasis on cultural individuality, ignoring this untranslatability and discarding cultural symbols is clearly disrespectful to the source language culture. In such cases, the translator can use alienation annotations to translate as the following example.

Example 5:

Source language: 你要是做了陈世美，千人骂万人唾的！

Target language: If you want to act like Chen Shimei in the play, **who abandoned his wife for another woman**, the people will scorn you and spit in your face!

Chen Shimei is portrayed in Chinese literature as a man who abandons his wife for personal gain. The translator first transliterates the name symbol Chen Shimei, and then introduces the cultural connotation of the symbol to the target language readers by means of in-text annotation. In this way, the author's writing style and cultural connotations are preserved to the greatest extent possible, and the purpose of communication is also achieved.

4.5. Deconstructionist View of Translation

4.5.1. Definition

The translation theory of deconstructionism is developed on the basis of the translation theory of structuralism. It opposes metaphysics and dissolves the translation system with "one center, one origin, one absolute truth" as the core, and believes that sounds and words cannot produce meaning, and that the meaning of a text cannot be confirmed, so there is no limit to the interpretation of a text. The French philosopher Derrida is the representative of deconstructionist translation theory, and his concept of *différance* is the core of deconstructionist translation theory. It does not mean the words in translation or the process of translation, but rather what these words produce in the operation of time and space. In other words, it shows that there is both sameness and difference between diachronicity and synchronicity, part and whole and author and translator.

Deconstructionist translation theory challenges the traditional view of translation. From a deconstructive point of view, translation is no longer about creating a text in the target language that is equivalent to the source language text. Instead, the translation focuses more on a more complex set of relationships between the two texts rather than giving primacy to one text. There is no longer a possibility to determine the exact meaning in the target language text according to the surface structure of the source language text. Instead, the key issue of translation consists in presenting all what is not shown in the surface structure of the source language text.

4.5.2. Features

The deconstructionist view of translation holds that texts have no origin and are

open and intertextual [14]. Because the text is infinitely open and eternally dynamic, translation is not a transmission of meaning or a reproduction of the source language; there should be multiple possibilities, namely plurality in the translation. Therefore, the practice of translation from a deconstructionist perspective is to reverse the order of language and words, to use textual differences to illustrate the openness, multiplicity and polysemy of culture and literature, so that readers of the target language can read the rich meanings of the translation by the words.

This notion of translation gives rise to three translation methods, namely, the annotation method, the substitution method and the interpretation method, which can be used in the face of the semantic gaps existing in the text. The following paper will analyze how this view of translation deconstructs the untranslatability of cultural texts and reconstructs the source language text in a pluralistic manner through the translation of the title of *Zhong Yong*.

Example 6:

Source language: 中庸

Translated version 1: The Doctrine of the Mean

Translated version 2: The Universal Order or Conduct of Life

Translated version 3: The Mean-in-Action

The concept of “中庸” is a concept in Confucianism, in which “中” means neutral, impartial, and “庸” means normal, and it believes that the highest standard of handling things is the attitude of impartiality and the most appropriate degree. The semantics of this topic is absent in the target language. Both version 1 and version 3 adopt the interpretation method, using “mean” to explain the intermediate meaning contained in the source language text, but the former emphasizes a static rule, while the latter emphasizes dynamics, indicating that “mean” is presented in the context of change and adjustment of things. Version 2 adopts a substitution method to reconstruct the meaning from the perspective of religious morality, and the translation indicates that “中庸” is a kind of ideal goal, and that people should observe morality and civilization to maintain civilization and peace in the world.

4.6. Summary

With the development of linguistics and the continuous maturity and progress of translation practice, we also gradually realize that translation itself is a kind of incomplete interpretation, so in any translation practice, untranslatability is an unavoidable problem and objective existence. The study of the dialectical relationship between translatability and untranslatability is essentially a solution to the problem of how to reduce the influence of untranslatability and maximize translatability.

5. Conclusion

This chapter will give a general summary of the whole text, elaborate on the

research shortcomings of this dissertation, and the implications of this study for foreign language learning and translation.

5.1. Major Findings of the Study

Through a systematic study of translatability and untranslatability, we have basically sorted out the origin of the paradox of translatability and untranslatability in the field of translation from both philosophical and linguistic dimensions, and thus considered the factors affecting translatability and untranslatability from the perspectives of thinking, culture and language, and concluded that translatability and untranslatability are largely influenced by cognitive, cultural and aesthetic needs, and further found that they are not binary opposites. The academic debate on translatability and untranslatability is essentially a discussion of the degree of the translatability in a text, in which the smaller the untranslatability, the higher the degree of translatability; conversely, the lower the degree of translatability. Ultimately, it is found that translatability and untranslatability are dialectically complementary relationships. In other words, translators can realize the transformation of untranslatability to translatability through certain conditions and strategies, and eventually achieve the regulation of translatability.

5.2. Implications of the Study

Translatability and untranslatability are not diametrically opposed, but are united in their opposition. In translation practice, the translator strives to accurately convey the meaning and style of the original text, but does not pursue absolute formal consistency or the slightest loss of information. Translators should begin by upholding the basic idea that there is no such thing as a translation or other form of communication in which absolutely no information is lost. On this basis, the translator should give full play to his or her subjective initiative and maintain an active view of translation practice. For when translators insist that everything is translatable, they focus on the translatability of any text in general, while when translators believe that complete translation is impossible, they focus on the untranslatability of any text in part. Therefore, translators should not give up translation because of the untranslatability of the text, nor should they translate indiscriminately because of the translatability of the text. Instead, they should strive to find the most appropriate language and turn untranslatability into translatability through a lot of cultural communication and exchange.

5.3. Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Future Research

This study is dedicated to exploring the theoretical basis of translatability and untranslatability, listing the comprehensive factors affecting this issue, and elaborating on the dialectical complementarity of the two concepts. It does not propose a methodology for the difficult problem of untranslatability encountered in translation practice. The conclusions of the research on the issues of the substance, criteria, and methods of translation and the theoretical proposition of establishing

translation science are supposed to be consistent. Therefore, the future study of translatability and untranslatability can be combined with the solution of methodological, strategic, and standard issues in translation practice.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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