

The Analysis of Field and Tenor in Dialogues of the Novel: The Bridges of Madison County and Its Chinese Translation

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ABSTRACT

This study applies field and tenor analysis to the dialogues in a novel and its Chinese translation. The linguistic data is *The Bridges of Madison County*, written by Robert James Waller, an American writer. Waller is originally an economics professor who taught in the University of Northern Iowa in the Middle West. Out of a field investigation accompanied by unexpected inspiration afterwards, Waller completed this book in 1992. It consequently proved a great success and turned out to be one of the bestselling in the last decade of the twentieth century. The Chinese translated version is rendered by Taiwanese translator, Mei-zhen, Wu in 1995. On the basis of her translation as target text (TT) and the original as source text (ST), the analysis model proposed by Juliane House (1997) is simultaneously drawn upon to the investigation of Wu's translation quality. The analyzing parameters raised by House mainly consist of three functional variables which are concerned with field, tenor and mode. This thesis is devoted to the analysis of the parameters of field and tenor. Besides, House (1997) hypothesized two basic translation types which are overt and covert translations. According to her (p. 112), the overt translation reaches equal function to ST in respect of the dimensions of register, genre, language and text. On the other hand, covert translation denotes a translation whose source text is not specifically addressed to a particular source culture audience; that is, it is not particular tied to the source language and culture (p. 69). After meticulous comparison in lexical, syntactic and textual levels between the ST and TT, some mismatches and errors are found. To a certain extent, TT achieves the equivalent result to ST in terms of field because of the translational strategies that the translator Wu adopted in her TT, such as shifts, addition, idiom and repetitive terms in the sentences. However, TT does not reflect the similar effect that the author intends to deliver to his readers in respect of tenor. From research result, the researcher found that translator Wu adopts covert translation strategy. Nevertheless, partly because of translator Wu's misinterpretation and partly her fragmented comprehension to the ST, the translation result still leaves the partial trace of overt translation.

Keywords : field、tenor、 dialogues、 covert translation、 overt translation、 translation quality

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