An Analysis of Karen Kingsbury's English Version of *Love in a Fallen City* Under the Guidance of Toury's Translation Norm Theory

XUE Xiaowen[a],*

[a]M.A., School of Foreign Languages and Literatures, Lanzhou University, China
*Corresponding author.

Abstract

Love in a Fallen City is one of the masterpieces of Eileen Chang, with great artistic value and aesthetic significance. The English version translated by Karen Kingsbury has also been widely accepted by readers in English-speaking countries. The paper attempts to analyze the work under Toury's translation norm theory, discussing how Karen's version successfully fulfills the initial norm, preliminary norms and operational norms; thus providing a new perspective to study C-E translation of such literary works as *Love in a Fallen City*.

Key words: Karen Kingsbury; *Love in a Fallen City*; Toury's translation norm theory

1. BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO *LOVE IN A FALLEN CITY*

Love in a Fallen City demonstrates the aesthetic view of Eileen Chang, which entails forlornness and beauty, and the love between Bai Liusu and Fan Liuyuan gives readers a glimpse of Chang's writing style that contains the tone of sadness in a happy ending. Besides, the novel describes the awakening of the female consciousness of Chinese women at that time, which is of significance even in contemporary society, wherein gender issues remain a significant concern.

Karen Kingsbury translated *Love in a Fallen City* in 2007. The book was published by Penguin Press, listed as one of "Penguin Classics," and it has been well accepted among English readers. When translating *Love in a Fallen City*, Karen Kingsbury drew inspiration from Eileen Chang's translation strategy in *The Golden Cangue*; thus, she tried to retain the original language features, cultural characteristics, and specific expressions as much as possible while also ensuring that English readers feel the charm of the Chinese version. This paper quotes several examples from Karen's English version to illustrate that translation norms play an important role in contributing to the success of the translated work. Gideon Toury (2012) claimed that norms could influence not only translation of all kinds but also at every stage of the act. Indeed, traces of their activities can be noticed in every aspect of the end product. Hence, analyzing *Love in a Fallen City* under the guidance of Toury's norm theory helps to explore the reason for its high acceptability.

2. TOURY'S TRANSLATION NORM THEORY

Based on the polysystem theory put forward by Even Zohar, Gideon Toury proposed translation norm theory, which significantly promotes the development of translation studies. 1972, James Holmes put forward the theoretical framework of translation, dividing translation studies into pure translation and applied translation. Toury's translation norm theory is a groundbreaking work in descriptive translation studies since translation doesn't have strict rules at that time.

Toury (2012, p.xiii) reckoned that translation norms aim at ensuring the findings of individual studies will be intersubjectively testable and comparable, and the studies themselves replicable. He found that various norms will operate at different stages in translation, i.e., initial norm,

preliminary norms, and operational norms. Preliminary norms are translation policy and directness of translation, and operational norms describe the presentation and linguistic matter of the targeted text, including matricial norms and textual-linguistic norms (Munday, 2012).

3. CASE ANALYSIS OF *LOVE IN A FALLEN CITY*

Toury's Translation norm theory proves to be feasible at different stages in various translation activities. Following is the analysis of some examples taken from Karen's English version of *Love in a Fallen City*, based on the three norms proposed by Toury.

3.1 Realization of Initial Norm

There are two extremes in the initial norm: acceptability and adequacy. Adequacy means heavy leaning on the assumed original and sweeping adherence to norms that originate and acceptability refers to acting in the target culture itself (Toury, 2012, p.79). Toury (2012) also added that it is by no means necessary to assume that every single low-level choice was made in full accord with the same initial norm.

Qin Jianghua (2011) thinks that Karen Kingsbury adopted literal translation extensively, and the purpose is to convey the characteristics of Chinese culture and inject new elements into English literature. However, when she translated *Love in a Fallen City*, she not entirely adopted adequate translation but completed with acceptable translation. In the preface to the English translation of *Love in a Fallen City*, Karen Kingsbury mentioned that today's young people are living in the era of multimedia. The world is full of fragmented information, and the common reader is less patient to quietly and thoroughly read over a book with loads of foreign elements. From this perspective, although the translation should be closer to the original, translators can both use adequate translation and acceptable translation when translating since they shall care about the targeted readers' expectations.

3.1.1 Adequate Translation

Adequate translation means the translation act will be dominated by attempts to have the ensuing text reflect the source text along with the norms embodied in it, and through them features of SL itself, or of a particular tradition within it (Toury, 2012, p.79). The following is an analysis through specific examples:

Example 1:

胡琴咿咿呀呀拉着，在万盏灯的夜晚，拉过来又拉过去，说不尽的苍凉的故事——不问也罢！

Translation: When the huqin wails on a night of ten thousand lamps, the bow

slides back and forth, drawing forth a tale too desolate for words—oh! why go into it?

Example 2:

让人家笑掉了牙齿。

Translation: People will laugh till their teeth fall out.

In the source text, Eileen Chang used the move of huqin to show the lapse of time and brought readers a kind of dynamic beauty. Karen Kingsbury used the technique of personification to establish such connection between huqin and time, reproduce the dynamic beauty and transmit the information of the Chinese sentence.

Example 2 is a pretty blatant example of adequate translation since there is no set phrase in English. The expression aims at transferring an unfamiliar rhetoric image to English readers.

3.1.2 Acceptable Translation

Toury (2012, p.79) proposed that acceptable translation means target norms that will be triggered and set into motion, thus relegating the source text and its unique web of relations based on SL features to a secondary position as a source of constraints. In other words, if the translator chooses to move to the target language, then the translator is subjected to the norms of it, and the acceptability of the translation will be relatively improved. However, from another perspective, the translation inevitably deviates from the source text to some extent.

Example 3:

"你四嫂就是这样的碎嘴子！你可不能跟她一样的见识……"

Translation: "Your Fourth Sister-in-law has a sharp tongue, but that doesn't mean you should follow suit……"

Example4:

"早就知道人家多嫌着我，就只差明说。"

Translation: "I've known for ages how much they resent me, even bite their tongues."

From the Chinese version, we can see traditional Chinese expressions: "碎嘴子," Kareen Kingsbury translated the two words in English respectively as: "a sharp tongue." Actually, "碎嘴子" in Chinese means that someone likes saying what makes other people feel annoyed, while "sharp tongue" in English means that someone says things that are unkind or critical though often clever. Thus, although the English expression is easy for English people to understand, there are some differences between the translated version and the original from the perspective of their connotation.

Then, take a look at Example 4. There is an expression "bite one's tongue" in the English version, which means stopping oneself from saying something (often something potentially inappropriate, hurtful, or offensive). This is such a successful example of acceptable translation. "只差明说" and "bite one's tongue" are highly equivalent, even in respect of connotation.

Bonnie Mcdougall (2014) thinks that the translation of contemporary Chinese literature into English over the past three or four decades, whether by Chinese or non-Chinese translators and whether published inside China or abroad, has not been a great success. While *Love in a Fallen City* is different, although it follows Eileen Chang's translation

policy: bringing targeted readers to the source text; Kingsbury also cares about the reading habits of English readers, and that's one of the factors of the translation can receive great popularity in western countries.

3.2 Realization of Preliminary Norms

As mentioned above, there are two parts of preliminary norms: translation policy and directness of translation. The following part will discuss from the perspective of preliminary norms.

3.2.1 Translation policy

Translation policy refers to those factors that govern the choice of text types, even of individual texts, to be imported into a particular culture/language via translation at a particular point in time (Toury,2012). When studying for a Master's degree and a Doctor's degree at Columbia University, Karen Kingsbury studied with famous Chinese scholars Xia Zhiqing and Wang Dewei. Xia Zhiqing strongly recommended she study Eileen Chang's works at that time. Thus, she was gradually attracted by the dramatic tension, subtle allegory, and unique writing style of Eileen Chang's original work and held great interest in translating these works into English.

3.2.2 Directness of Translation

As for this aspect, Toury (2012) proposed that it relates to the threshold of tolerance for translating from languages other than the ultimate SLs. While in *Love in a Fallen City*, we can hardly find any trace of any mediating language. Karen Kingsbury learned Chinese under the guidance of Xia Zhiqing, a famous Chinese literary critic; thus, it's not difficult for her to read Chinese books, and she needn't resort to mediate language.

3.3 Realization of Operational Norms

Operational norms may be said to constitute a model, in accordance with which translations come into being (Toury, 2012, p.84). Such norms are of the linguistic matter of targeted texts, which will affect the text's matrix, such as textual and verbal formulation.

Matricial norms relate to the fullness of translation, such as omission, relocation of passages, text's segmentation into chapters, stanzas, passages and suchlike and the addition of passages or footnotes (Toury, 2012). While in the Penguin Classics version, Karen Kingsbury keeps the completeness of the translation. Although she added three footnotes, that are "胡琴," "死生契阔" and "倾国倾城", for the *Love in a Fallen City*, while they account for a minor part; Hence matricial norms shall not be discussed here.

Textual-linguistic norms govern the selection of linguistic material for the formulation of the target text or the replacement of the original material (Toury, 2012, p.83). There have been various traditions of segmenting a text, and the differences between them always have implications for translation. Translators should decide the translation strategies at first, which is requisite for the choice of operational norms. Here, we can see some

examples in *Love in a Fallen City*. The following analysis will focus on textual-linguistic norms and translation methods employed by Karen Kingsbury.

3.3.1 Omission and Addition:

Omission and addition are two common methods in translation. Omission means dropping certain words, paragraphs, or chapters from the original text while translating. The addition means that the translator may have to find out the hidden meaning of the original sentence and make it more complete. And it also could promote the target readers' understanding of the source text.

Example 5:
最后大家觉得到底是瞒不住，爽性开诚布公，打开天窗说亮话，拍着腿感慨一番。

Translation: In the end they decided it couldn't be kept quiet, so they announced it cheerfully and openly, slapping their thighs, moaning and sighing about the whole thing.

Example 6:
为了宝络这头亲，却忙得鸦飞雀乱，人仰马翻。

Translation: For Baolu, however, they fell all over themselves, bustling about with great fanfare, turning the house upside down.

Example5 shows the phenomenon of omission. In the targeted text, we can see that Eileen Chang uses two words: "开诚布公" and "打开天窗说亮话" to express "openly," while in the targeted text, Karen Kinsbury only uses "announced it cheerfully and openly" to replace the Chinese idiom, to enhance the readability of the translation through deleting the redundant part.

In Example6, we can see that Eileen Chang doesn't point out who is busying, while Karen Kingsbury adds "they" as doers because the English sentence structure is different from Chinese, which needn't a subject to lead to a complete sentence. There are two different translation strategies shown in the example. Karen Kinsbury translates "鸦飞雀乱" in domestication while translating "人仰马翻" in foreignization.

The choice of addition or omission depends on the translator's subjectivity and the context of translation. As the last two examples, the translation of Karen Kingsbury is more in line with the reading habits of target readers.

3.3.2 Division and Combination

Division means the translator divides the whole sentence into several parts, which can help target readers to understand the source text. The combination means combining clauses based on their intricate logical relations.

Example 7:
四奶奶索性冲着流苏的房间嚷道："我就是指桑骂槐，骂了她了，又怎么着？又不是千年万代没见过男子汉，怎么一闻见生人气，就痰迷心窍，发了疯了？"

Translation: Fourth Mistress turned to face Liusu's room and shouted, "I may be pointing at the mulberry but I'm cursing the locust tree. And why shouldn't I curse

her? It's not as if she hadn't seen a man for a thousand years! So why does she act crazy, all worked up and woozy the minute she catches a whiff of one?"

Example 8：

继续的砰砰砰，仿佛在箱子盖上用锤子敲钉，捶不完地捶。从天明捶到天黑，又从天黑捶到天明。

Translation: The crumping sounds continued, as if someone were hammering nails into the lid of the trunk, hammering on and on; hammering from day to dark, then dark to day again.

Example7 divides the two sentences said by Fourth Mistress into four parts to show the logical order of her words. Firstly, she acknowledges that she is cursing Bai Liusu, then she uses a rhetorical question to lead an exaggerated sentence, finally showing her complaint against Bai Liusu. In this sentence, there are several culture-specific terms, and Karen Kingsbury mainly deals with the literal translation, which conforms to her initial norm.

Example8 is the case of combination. The last sentence describes the hammering sound; hence the two sentences are talking about the same thing. Karen Kingsbury's choice in the example aims at improving the fluency of the whole sentence. Actually, in the whole translation, there are few cases of combination since complicated sentences will make it difficult for readers to read and lower readers' interest in reading novels.

3.3.3 Diction

Vocabulary is vital to the whole translation. Especially, a single Chinese character may contain more than one meaning; selecting the proper meaning for a specific word seems quite significant for translation. Besides, sometimes both words A and B in the target language may have the same meaning. However, the translator should select the one which is more consistent with the target readers' ways of expression.

Example 9:

一样是两个女儿，一方面如火如荼，一方面冷冷清清，相形之下，委实使人难堪。

Translation: Two daughters in the same house, but one got lots of attention and the other got cold silence. The contrast was painfully obvious.

Example 10:

一个女人，再好些，得不着异性的爱，也就得不着同性的尊重。女人们就是这点贱。

Translation: No matter how amazing a woman is, she won't be respected by her sex unless she's loved by a member of the opposite one. Women are petty this way.

In Example9, we can see that the phrase "难堪" is translated into " painfully obvious." It seems that the English word is not entirely consistent with Chinese meaning. In contrast, actually, in the Chinese sentence, the term "难堪" indicates the different treatment received by Baoluo and Liusu from their relatives. Such a considerable difference makes Liusu feel painful, so the English translation is proper.

Compared with Example9, Example10 can better illustrate the importance of vocabulary selection. In the Chinese version, the character "贱" expresses the anger of Eileen Chang for those women who criticize her sex since they do not have the love of men. Thus, if Kingsbury translates it into "cheap" or other offensive words will blot out the true meaning of Eileen Chang.

From this part, three phenomena can be concluded. Firstly, Karen Kingsbury employs these translation methods to ensure that Eileen Chang's true meaning can be transferred to readers completely. Second, she also tries to avoid long sentences when translating. Third, as for culture-loaded words, she both adopts literal translation and literary translation, and the literal translation is the main one.

4. CONCLUSIONS

It's obvious that, from the above analysis, the whole translation activity of *Love in a Fallen City* is, to some extent, influenced by the three norms: initial norm influences the selection of original works (translator's willingness); preliminary norms have an impact on translation strategies, and Karen Kingsbury uses adequate translation as the primary strategy, complementing with acceptable translation; operational norms influence the specific choice of words and sentences. Those methods employed by Karen Kingsbury aim at fully transferring the meaning of the source text while also being easier to be understood by targeted readers. It also shows that operational norms of *Love in a Fallen City* conform to its initial norm. *Love in a Fallen City* can be popular in the Western world not only because of its dramatic plots but also because the translated version can invigorate targeted readers' reading interests which benefit from the translator's flexible choice under translation norms.

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