

中文摘要

习语作为语言的精髓部分，与文化关系密切，它必然反映一个民族的语言和文化特征。习语翻译的成功与否在很大程度上取决于译者能否成功地把握和再现习语的文化内涵，同时也对整个文本翻译的质量和效果影响很大。本文作者主要从文化视角探讨了中国古典名著《儒林外史》英译本中习语翻译的若干原则问题。

翻译是语言活动，更是文化活动，其本质是跨文化的交际行为。译者在处理源语文本中文化因素时常采取归化策略或异化策略。归化策略以目的语为中心，追求译文符合译入语语言及文化的规范，主张把源语作者的意图与作品中的文化信息转化为译入语读者所熟稔的东西。异化策略则以源语为中心，保留和再现源语文本之异，让译入语读者了解异域文化和原作内容及写作手法，从而丰富译入语语言及文化。针对两种语言及文化的差异，以及翻译目的、文本类型、作者意图以及译入语读者需求和层次几方面的不同，译者在实际操作时应灵活使用这两种翻译策略。

作为中国古典名著《儒林外史》的唯一一部完整英译本，The Scholars 无疑是非常成功的。杨宪益、戴乃迭夫妇本着向西方传递中国文化的翻译思想，在翻译过程中恰如其分地使用了归化和异化策略，译出了原作的特色。其语言生动优美，艺术感染力极强，与原著相映成趣，在很多方面都展现了中国特有的深厚而悠久的文化内涵，对译入语读者有着强大的吸引力。本文作者认为杨氏夫妇译作成功的主要原因之一就是他们对《儒林外史》中习语的巧妙处理。

为研究之便，本文作者将《儒林外史》中的习语分为成语、谚语、典故、俗语、歇后语以及俚语六类。通过大量的例证，作者对习语以及杨氏夫妇的习语翻译作了透彻的分析和深入的研究。作者认为杨氏夫妇将习语中的中国文化内涵介绍给英语世界时，采用了以“异化为主、归化为辅”的翻译策略。杨氏夫妇传神入化的习语翻译给后来的译者树立了很好的榜样，也给研究者提供了很好的研究课题，值得进一步学习和研究。

最后，作者指出，译者在翻译时要积极创造条件，合理利用异化策略和归化策略，要有文化自觉意识，努力传达和吸收异域文化，弘扬和发展本土文化，以促进不同民族间的相互交流和理解。

关键词：儒林外史、习语翻译、语言、文化、归化与异化

ABSTRACT

This thesis purports to study the translation of idioms in *The Scholars*, a classic work in Chinese literature, whose only complete English version is translated by Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang (hereinafter the Yangs). Idioms are the essence and cream of a language, a part of culture which consists of all the shared material and spiritual products of human society, and they embody the linguistic and cultural characteristics of a nation. Language is the vehicle of culture and it mirrors nearly all the aspects of culture. So, as the most succinctly essential part of language, most idioms are culture-specific and reflect cultures in both direct and indirect ways. It is always difficult for the translator to convey both the literal meaning and the cultural implication of an idiom. Therefore, the success of idiom translation is, to a great extent, in proportion to the success of the text translation.

Translation is not only a bilingual activity, but a bicultural one, and its nature is the inter-cultural communication. In dealing with the source language culture, there exist two methodologically distinct strategies: domestication and foreignization. The former, which is target-language-culture-oriented, puts emphasis on the target language (hereinafter the TL) culture in order to make the translated texts intelligible and acceptable for the TL readers; while in foreignization, the translator is source-language-culture-oriented and he strives to preserve as much as possible the exotic cultural flavor of the source language (hereinafter the SL). Since Chinese and English belong to two entirely different language families, and furthermore, such natural and social factors as geographical backgrounds, cultural traditions and concepts of value, are not the same, it is of great significance for the translator to expertly manipulate both languages and cultures. As for a Chinese-English translator, the lion's share of his job is to transmit the cultural specialties contained in Chinese, especially in Chinese idioms, to English readers.

In this thesis, the idioms are classified into six different kinds, i.e. Chinese set phrases, proverbs, allusions, common sayings, slang and Chinese two-part sayings, all of which can be found in *The Scholars*. The translation of them in this classic is both important and difficult because they contain a lot of cultural information, represent the genius and wit of the author and help to reveal the spirit of the whole book. The Yangs set us a good example of how to translate the idioms. Through his detailed analysis of the Yangs' idiom translation, the author of this thesis discovers that,

though the Yangs adopted foreignization to disseminate the Chinese culture to the English world, they didn't limit themselves to it and they also made use of domestication as a device to introduce Chinese culture. Due to their skillful use of the two strategies of translation, most cultural connotations in the idioms of the original work are brought faithfully to English readers. However, "Even Homer sometimes nods", so it is no strange that there also exist some pitfalls in the Yangs' translation which are actually unavoidable in culture transmission and literary appreciation.

Based on the study of the origins and cultural features of idioms, of the relationship between language, culture and translation, and of the Yangs' idiom translation in *The Scholars*, the author of this thesis comes to the conclusion that a translator should always bear in mind the linguistic and cultural differences between the SL and the TL, and try his best to preserve the special cultural flavor. To do so, the best strategy is foreignization and at the same time, multiple other factors should be reckoned, such as the writer's motivation, the purpose of translation, the acceptability of the TL readers and the like, so the author of this thesis thinks that domestication is also very helpful in dealing with cultural specialty of the SL. Only when foreignization is focused upon with domestication as a supportive strategy in the cross-cultural translation, can the TL readers have a deeper understanding of the SL culture and a better appreciation of the theme, the beauty, and the exotic flavor of the original works.

Key words: *The Scholars*, idiom translation, language, culture, foreignization vs. domestication,

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INTRODUCTION

It is over 250 years since *Ru Lin Wai Shi* (《儒林外史》), one of the well-known classical novels in Chinese literature, was published. It has been introduced, translated and studied both at home and abroad, and has had great effects on foreign language readers. But it was not until the 1950s that the complete English version of it came into being. It was translated by Yang Xianyi and his English wife Gladys Yang, who have wonderfully handled the various cultural problems in their translation. As the sole complete English version of *Ru Lin Wai Shi*, *The Scholars* is most popular among Chinese and English readers because of its plot, diction, ironical devices and its exquisite rendition. The Yangs own their success, in large measure, to their strategies of translation in general, and idiom translation in particular.

As idioms are usually cultural specific, how to deal with the cultural elements embedded in those idioms is of great importance in translation. A proper idiom translation is essential for the TL readers to fully appreciate this great Chinese novel, and it is a challenging job for the translators as well, because of a large number of idioms involved in.

In recent years, translators both at home and abroad have been trying to replace the study of traditional translation with cultural transfer. Translation is considered a cross-cultural activity, which concerns not only two languages but also two cultures, and the essence of it is to achieve inter-cultural communication. Cultural differences refer to the differences in knowledge, life styles, the ways of thinking, beliefs, customs and so on, which not only give rise to the misunderstanding and even failures in cross-cultural communication but also seem to be the biggest obstacles to a successful translation today. In order to translate successfully, a translator must be expert at both two languages and two cultures, and he should adopt efficient strategies to reflect, preserve and transmit the SL culture.

The author of this thesis wants to make a study of idiom translation in *The Scholars*, and to examine the translation strategies applied by the translators to crack the problems of cross-cultural communication. And he hopes his study can arouse others' interest to the introduction, study and translation of Chinese classics.

This thesis is composed of five chapters:

In Chapter I, the author introduces something about the writer and the story, study and translation of *Ru Lin Wai Shi*; he also introduces something about the translators of the sole complete English version.

In Chapter II, the definitions, origins and some typical features of idioms are

analyzed; the cultural differences and similarities between Chinese idioms and English idioms studied, and the significance of Chinese idioms in *The Scholars* stressed.

In Chapter III, the author gives a brief introduction to language and culture; the definitions and strategies of translation; the relationship between language, culture and translation. Also, the traditional approaches of idiom translation are listed with examples.

In Chapter IV, plenty of examples are quoted to study the Yangs' idiom translation, and the idioms chosen from *The Scholars* are classified into six categories. From his analyses, the author shows to the TL readers the importance of idiom translation in the whole text.

In Chapter V, to make it clear that it is real challenging work for one to do idiom translation in translating Chinese classics, the author points out some pitfalls in the Yangs' translation.

In the conclusion part, the author claims that, in the process of translation, the translators must have a keenly cultural consciousness and foreignization should be stressed with domestication as a support in cultural translation, especially in idiom translation. Through his study, the author expects more and more people to get to know Chinese culture by reading Chinese classics in their native languages; and he still hopes more and more people will take part in the introduction, study, and translation of Chinese classics.

CHAPTER I

SOMETHING ON *RU LIN WAI SHI* AND ITS TRANSLATION

1.1 The Writer and the Story

The writer of *Ru Lin Wai Shi* is Wu Jingzi (吴敬梓), who was born in a big feudal bureaucratic family in Quanjiao County, Anhui Province, China in 1701. His family was on the decline at that time and he experienced both prosperity and poverty. Having failed many times in the feudal imperial examination, he moved to Nanjing in 1733 after his wife's death and another failure of the examination, where he met a lot of literati who were either interested or uninterested in scholarly honors and official ranks. After so many ups and downs in his life, he saw through the world and began a life of dissipation. From 1742, he had to ask his friends and relatives for help because of poverty. In the year of 1754, Wu died of illness in Yangzhou.

The hardships he endured, the declining family's social settings, the despise of those who were addicted to ranks and gains, his keen insight and great talent, all contributed to the writing of this great work--*Ru Lin Wai Shi*, which was written, polished and enlarged between 1735 and 1748.

Ru Lin Wai Shi is regarded as the first satirical novel in Chinese literature history. It is a milestone of the satirical art in Chinese literature, especially in Chinese novel. "The theme of this book is to criticize the imperial examination system and thirst for high official positions and riches." (陈美林, 1994:874) And in the art of irony, it is "castigating the errors of the times out of impersonal motives and sorrow, in a writing style of harmonious elegance and satire." (竺青, 1999:7) The sources for this novel are from popular stories about some renowned scholars who preferred to live a quiet life or pursued the traditional way of becoming officials. In this novel, Wu Jingzi made use of autobiographical experiences and modeled many characters on his friends and relatives; he wrote both the physical and spiritual lives of feudal scholars of different kinds. And he depicted the greed, hypocrisy and ugliness of various types of scholars who were poisoned by the feudal imperial examination, exposed the darkness and decadence of the feudal society, criticized and satirized the overwhelming prevalence of the imperial examination system and the feudal ethical codes at that time. Also Wu Jingzi used a good portion of irony in this novel to describe the ideals of the Confucian scholarship and their addictions to study and reclusive life. Moreover, the writer gave us a vivid delineation of the diversified aspects of Chinese culture, such as clothing, food, architecture,

transportation, marriage and funeral rites, religious belief, recreations, to name only a few. With succinct language and excellent characterization, it is, undoubtedly, a masterpiece of classical satirical literature of ancient China, and it exerts great influence over the later satirical Chinese literature.

1.2 Its Dissemination and Translation in Other Countries

Chinese traditional culture is doubtlessly a treasure both in China and in the world. Many Chinese classics are known to people all over the world and almost all the educated Chinese know *Ru Lin Wai Shi*, some characters of which have even become household names to common Chinese people. A lot of research work of this book has been done since its publication. And in some other countries, the translation and study it have a history of over 80 years. It has been translated into many foreign languages, and produced great influence on foreign readers. For example, in the late 1920s, the first eight chapters were translated into Russia and several passages of the book were translated into French in the early 1930s. Later complete foreign language versions of it came into being in France, Russia, Romania, Vietnam, Korea and many other countries. Also there are many essays and books about this novel and they help introduce Chinese culture contained in the book to the world.

The earliest English version of it is the first chapter of this book, translated by Ge Chuangui (葛传槩), appeared in *The English Journal* published by Chicago University Press in 1939. Chapter 55 was translated and introduced by Xu Zhenping (徐真平) with a name of *Four New Characters* in the English version of *Tien Hsia Monthly* (《天下月刊》) in 1941. Chapter 2 and chapter 3 were translated by Wang Jizhen (王际真) into *Two Scholars Passing the Provincial Examination* and were collected in *Chinese Wisdom and Humor* which was published in New York in 1946. Yang Xianyi (杨宪益) and Gladys Yang (戴乃迭) translated the first seven chapters into English and got them printed in *Chinese Literature* in 1954. Chapter 31 and chapter 32 were translated into *The Generous Young Scholar* by Zhang Xincang (张心沧) in 1973. The continuous introduction and translation of *Ru Lin Wai Shi* show that this novel is loved by many people, but there wasn't any complete English version of it until the publication of *The Scholars*, also translated by Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang in 1957. *The Scholars* was the sole complete English version of *Ru Lin Wai Shi* so far, which consists of 55 chapters and was first published by Foreign Languages Publishing House (外文出版社). This English version was reprinted again and again by many publishing houses both inland and overseas. The following examples and relevant analyses of this thesis are based on the Chinese--

English bilingual book of *The Scholars* (《儒林外史》) published by Hunan Publishing House (湖南出版社) in 1996.

1.3 The Translators of *The Scholars* and Their Translating Thoughts

Yang Xianyi is a prolific translator and famous comparative literatus in contemporary China, and he is well-known for his linguistic competence and cultural awareness. He and his wife Gladys Yang, who is a native of England, have translated many Chinese classics into English since the 1940s. Among those are *The Book of Songs* (《诗经》), *Tang Poems* (《唐诗》), *Song Prose* (《宋词》), *Selections From Records of the Historian* (《史记选》), *Selected Tang Dynasty Stories* (《唐代传奇选》), *A Dream of Red Mansions* (《红楼梦》), *The Scholars* (《儒林外史》) and *Selected Stories of Lu Xun* (《鲁迅小说选集》), and still a lot unmentioned. Their translation works have introduced rich Chinese cultural heritage to the foreign readers. Also they have introduced to Chinese readers many western cultural treasures like 《神囚记》 (*Prometheus Bound*), 《奥德修斯》 (*Odyssey*) and 《卖花女》 (*Pygmalion*). They made great contributions to the cultural exchange between China and western countries.

So far as the cultural heritage of the original text is concerned, the Yangs pursue to retain the images and flavor of the original work through foreignization as much as possible, while they do not reject the domestication strategy altogether. “We Chinese should know about the cultural heritage of other countries, and foreigners also should know about the profound cultural heritage of Chinese ... The translators should try their best to keep faithfully the images, the core of Chinese culture and civilization. This is a question of translating Chinese traditional culture, a question of transferring the value and soul of Chinese culture, and a question of reproducing the message about Chinese people’s daily life, their happiness and sadness, love and hatred.” (任生名, 1993:33-34)

In accordance with such translating ideas, the Yangs grasped the pith of the original work while they were translating *Ru Lin Wai Shi*. Through their appropriate use of the strategies of foreignization and domestication, the Yangs transmitted Chinese culture contained in *The Scholars* to English readers.

1.4 The Study of *The Scholars* in China

For more than 250 years, a lot of research work has been done on *Ru Lin Wai Shi*, and many papers and monographs were published. Since the 20th century, famous scholars like Chen Duxiu (陈独秀), Hu Shi (胡适), Lu xun (鲁迅), Qian Xuantong (钱玄

同), Li Hanqiu (李汉秋), Chen Meilin (陈美林), all thought highly of it; some even thought that its true-sense irony about the worldly life was incomparable and they regarded it as, just like *A Dream of Red Mansions*, one of the two pearls of Chinese novels. Their work also contributed to the study and spread of *Ru Lin Wai Shi* greatly.

Although the complete English version of *Ru Lin Wai Shi* is seen as an excellent translation of Chinese classics, few studies have been made about it by scholars since its publication. Some scholars such as Zhang Peiji (张培基) and Sha Feng (沙枫), selected some words or expressions as illustrations to their translation theories and practices, but few scholars have conducted systematic research on it. Li Guolin (李国林) explored the different ways of the Yangs' translation about some highly culture-loaded words and expressions in *The Scholars*, but he only held that the translators of Chinese literary works should learn from the Yangs and bear in mind the responsibility of introducing Chinese cultural heritage to foreign readers, and his research work on the idioms was too general. Recently, professor Xu Jun (徐珺) made studies from systematic-functional and cultural-oriented perspectives, but she also traveled on the same beaten track as her formers by paying inadequate attention to the idiom translation, which in fact plays an important part in the whole translation of the novel. All these research fruits help the readers of Chinese and English readers to better understand this great work, but the number of such papers is far from enough. The author of this thesis hopes, by making a study of the idiom translation in *The Scholars*, to make readers recognize the importance of idioms and the Yangs' strategy of idiom translation. He also expects his study to fill in the gap of idiom translation in *The Scholars* and to encourage more and more people to undertake the task of introducing and translating Chinese classics.

CHAPTER II

IDIOMS AS USED IN *THE SCHOLARS*

The language in *Ru Lin Wai Shi* was highly praised as “second to none in using the pure vernacular in all the Chinese classics”. (陈美林,1994:516) Wu Jingzi used a large number of vivid, expressive idioms with abundant local cultural flavor, most of which are still in use today and they have greatly enriched the Chinese language.

Both Chinese and English abound in idioms, “... their proper use in a language is often a mark of a person’s command of the language.” (邓炎昌, 1989:43) The perfect use of idioms makes our language colorful and interesting.

2.1 Definition and Classification of Idioms

Idiom refers to “a phrase which means something different from the meanings of separate words; the way of statement typical of a person or a people in their use of language” in *Longman English-Chinese Dictionary of Contemporary English*(1988); in *The New Oxford Dictionary of English*(2001) it is defined as “a group of words established by usage as having a meaning not deducible from those of the individual words”; it is also defined as “an expression established in the usage of a language that is peculiar to itself either in grammatical construction (as *no, it wasn’t me*) or in having a meaning that cannot be derived as a whole from the original meanings of its elements (as *Monday week* for “the Monday a week after or next Monday”...) (*Webster’s Third New International Dictionary*, 1976)

From the above definitions of different authoritative dictionaries, we can draw the following conclusion:

Idioms, which must be used as whole, are stereotyped from long usage and they have different meanings from their grammatical or literal meanings.

The Chinese equivalent of English idiom in a broad sense is Shuyu (熟语) or Xiyu (习语). According to *Modern Chinese Dictionary* (《现代汉语词典》,1984), Chinese idiom is defined as “the set phrases or short sentences, which are terse in form and pithy in meaning, used by people for a long time.” The definition of Chinese idioms in *Cihai* (《辞海》, 1989) is “the set phrases or sentences in language, the structure of which can’t be varied at random. It contains set phrases, in a narrow sense called “成语”, Proverbs (谚语), Sayings (格言), Xiehouyu (歇后语) and so on.” In *Study on Translating Chinese Idioms into English*, “Idioms are phrases or short sentences refined from the long-used

language in people's life; they are kernel and cream of a language..." (张培基, 1979:3) In a broad sense, Chinese idioms include the Set Phrases, Proverbs, Chinese Two-part Sayings (歇后语), Allusions (典故), Colloquialisms (俗语) or Common Sayings, and Slang (俚语). For the sake of study in this thesis, idioms refer to any type of the above mentioned Chinese idioms in a broad sense, and most of the idioms mentioned, chosen from *The Scholars*, contain cultural images since they are "formed" or "boiled down" through a long-time usage by people.

2.2 Origins of Idioms

"Idioms were created during the practical work of the ordinary people", (张培基, 1979:10) they are closely related to the historical background, life of economy and politics, geographic environments, social customs and mentality of a nation. The working people, such as workers, farmers, sailors, cooks and hunters, created a great number of idioms. Sailors have invented many sea-faring phrases, farmers have created idioms concerning their farm-work, fishermen talk of life in terms of fishing, and workers of all kinds of occupations have created their own idioms. The most vivid and useful of them were understood, accepted, popularized and passed down. Some of the idioms are recorded in written materials while others are handed down through lips of the common people. Idiom is like a mirror which reflects the special features of a nation or a culture. The sources of the idioms are:

- i. Ancient myths, legends or fables such as "巫山一夕 (p.1226)", "狐假虎威 (p.16)", "猪八戒吃人参果 (p.154)", "塞翁失马 (p.978)", "水中捞月 (p.1220)" and "南柯一梦 (p.1280)".
- ii. Historical events like "定鼎应天 (p.26)", "雪夜访普 (p.108)", "退避三舍 (p.250)" and "平原十日之饮 (p.292)".
- iii. Religions like Buddhism, such as "放焰口(p.90)", "观音送子 (p.1010)", "阿弥陀佛 (p.1276)", "烧香念佛 (p.1276)" and "躲得和尚躲不得寺 (p.1302)".
- iv. Classical works such as "新婚燕尔 (p.274)", "标梅之候 (p.498)", "望秋先零 (p.856)", "经史子集 (p.1140)" and "赔了夫人又折兵 (p.1230)".

2.3 Typical features of Idioms

As is said before, idioms are usually closely associated with historical backgrounds,

economic life, geographical conditions, science and technology, social conventions and mental states of the native speakers. These factors jointly determine the features of idioms and make it possible for the idioms to be of universal value, so that they have been accepted and handed down to the present day.

As the most condensed part of language, idioms not only display the linguistic features of the particular culture in their unique forms, but also indicate strong culture attributes in content, reflecting, on a large scale, the people's life, customs, beliefs and cultural traditions. Languages can find the best manifestation of their colorfulness, forcefulness, terseness and richness in idioms. So before proceeding to a detailed study of the translation of the Chinese idioms in *The Scholars*, the author lists the following two features of idioms:

2.3.1 Idiom is an Important Means of Rhetoric.

Since idioms are the kernel and cream of a language, the more use of them, the more arresting and enjoyable the story will be. A great number of idioms are used in *The Scholars* and they are out of the mouths of different characters. Most of them are full of vivid images with rich associative meanings; they employ various rhetoric devices such as simile, metaphor, personification to make the language more vivid, expressive and unforgettable, not only in showing the rich and colorful contents but also in conveying cultural information and people's thoughts, for example “癩蛤蟆想吃天鹅肉(p.68)”, an idiom that expresses the despise and curse of Butcher Hu to Fan Jin vividly. On the other hand, the euphony of sound is used in idioms so as to arrive at the objective of being rhythmical, intelligible and impressive, that is to say, cadence, meter, rhyme and balance can be exemplified by idioms. “路见不平，拔刀相助 (p.312)”, “瞒天讨价,就地还钱 (p.352)” and “对月伤怀,临风洒泪 (p.732)” are such examples.

Idioms can be the embodiment of wisdom and philosophy of people. Because of the unique phonetic features and rhetoric devices of Chinese idioms, the proper use of them contributes a great deal to make *The Scholars* “second to none” in language. Without the rhetoric means, the Chinese idioms would be barren and plain without any taste or wouldn't be as vivid, colorful and expressive as they are now.

2.3.2 Idioms are Independent, Stable but Irregular

Idioms are phrases or short sentences composed of words, but their meanings are not the totality of the individual words and it is often impossible to understand the idiom from the meanings of the individual words. They are well established and accepted

through common practice, and they are independent in meaning because the cultural and historical background and other elements determine their being understood as a whole. For instance, “塞翁失马”(p.978), whose literal meaning is *An old man on the frontier lost his horse*, is not difficult for those who know the story of the fable (originating from *Huai Nan Zi*) to understand, but if we explain it word for word to those who know nothing about this fable, they must be at a loss and couldn't get the implied meaning of this allusion: *A disaster is sometimes a blessing in disguise or a loss may turn out to be a gain*.

“The most characteristic feature of idioms is identified as lexical integrity.” (Fernando, 2001:9) Idioms are fixed in their structures and allow of no arbitrary changes in their components because they are well-established through long use and accepted by the common people. “Idioms are indivisible units whose components cannot be varied or varied only within definable limits. No other words can be substituted for the comprising... Nor are the words of an idiom usually recombining.” (ibid: 10) On the other hand, the stability of idioms is not absolute, “many idioms have alternatives, but such alternatives must be in accordance with the original idioms' total meaning and basic forms, they also should be accepted by the common people.”(张培基, 1979:27)

In *The Scholars*, variants of Chinese idioms can be seen in the change of words or of word order. For example, “爱玩不忍释手 (p.12)” is the variant of “爱不释手” (which means “be fond of and unwilling to part with something”), and “恨相见之晚 (p.258)” is the same as “相见恨晚” (which means “to regret having not met earlier”). These variants, regular or irregular, are only temporary creation to cover a special use in a certain contextual situation and based on the original meaning.

The irregularity mainly exists in their forms that the strength of idioms is unrestricted. Chinese idioms can be of different lengths and they may be composed of three or four or more than ten Chinese characters. The following idioms from *Ru Lin Wai Shi* serve as examples:

“钻狗洞 (p.524)”, “打秋风 (p.786)”, “束手无策 (p.1050)”, “望秋先零(p.856)”, and “清官难断家务事 (p.704)”; couplets as “瞒天讨价,就地还钱 (p.352)”, and “子建之才,潘安之貌 (p.712)”; short phrases as “三年清知府,十万雪花银(p.198)” and “一鞭一条痕,一捆一掌血 (p.274)” or sentences as “好男不吃分家饭,好女不穿嫁时衣 (p.276)”.

2.4 Cultural Differences and Similarities between Chinese Idioms and English Idioms

2.4.1 Cultural Differences

Though English idioms and Chinese idioms have some common features, there are many differences in terms of culture. Since culture is important in giving a language its characteristic and idiom is the cream of language, many distinctive cultural features, such as different geographical conditions, different states of mind, different economic conditions, different religious beliefs, and different historical and literary allusions, can be found in idioms.

The following are some of these cultural differences:

- i. They have different geographical conditions and different images. Britain is a country made up of islands and much smaller than China. Different environments decide many natural phenomena. For example, to describe the same phenomenon that something appears suddenly and in great number, we Chinese use “雨后春笋”, while the English people say “to spring up like mushroom”. And if we turn this Chinese idiom into *like the quick growth of bamboo root in spring*, the English readers must be puzzled about the image of “bamboo root (笋)” because there is no bamboo growing in Britain.
- ii. They reflect different states of mind of the two peoples. For example, we know there exist different ideas about the animal dog in the two cultures. Though both Chinese people and English people have cultivated the habit of keeping dogs, the English people think highly of dogs while Chinese people often hold a kind of repulsive feeling towards them. The English people use such idioms as “Love me, love my dog”, “Every dog has its day” and “He is a lucky dog” to express good or tender feelings. But in *The Scholars*, nearly all the idioms about the Chinese character “狗” are vulgar expressions: “放你的狗屁” (p.154), “狗攢的奴才” (p.234) and “一班狗才” (p.474) or expressions associated with a derogatory sense like “狗血喷头”(p.68).
- iii. They have different economic conditions. Different environmental conditions also decide the economic conditions of a nation. Since British people live along sea coasts, their livelihood is dependent on the sea and their economic life is about sailing, fishing and shipping business, which became the origins of some English idioms. The idioms “plain sailing”, “in deep water” and “to sink or swim” are such examples. As China is an agricultural country, there are more idioms about the agriculture and peasants in Chinese than those in English.

- iv. They are influenced by different religions. Since the introduction of Buddhism, Chinese was influenced by it greatly in ancient China, and many idioms have a lot to do with Buddhism, examples like “躲得和尚躲不得寺” (p.1302) are given in the forgoing part of this chapter. In the western societies, religion, especially Christianity, was once the most important social force and in modern times, many people still take Christianity as their belief. So we can find many idioms that originated from the religious scripture--the Bible. “As poor as a church mouse”, “not to know a man from Adam” and “at the eleventh hour” are such examples.
- v. They involve events or characters from the treasure house of Chinese literature and English literature. This treasure house consists of historical events, legends, myths, folklores, fables and other classics. For example, many English idioms like “love is blind”, “much ado about nothing”, “Achilles’ heel” and “A Damocles sword” are either from Shakespeare’s plays or myths of ancient Greece and Rome. In Chinese, idioms like “班门弄斧”, “卧薪尝胆”, “三顾茅庐” and “八仙过海, 各显神通” are drawn from Chinese literary classics.

As is known to all, China enjoys a long history of more than 5000 years, and she is regarded as a state of courtesy and high-level civilization. So there are a lot of idioms about courtesy and educational affairs. However, English idioms are poor in these areas.

These cultural differences between Chinese idioms and English idioms add charm and fascination to the two languages. But at the same time, they result in cultural barriers to the intercultural communication and translation. Because of the uniqueness of a culture, the TL receptors may be confused by the peculiar cultural message and images contained in the idioms of the SL. For example, if we translate “龙凤之表 (p.24)” (which means “a typical Chinese imaginary image about the appearance of Chinese emperors”) into “the appearance of dragon and phoenix”, the English readers may be quite bewildered because “dragon” is a kind of horrible monster and “phoenix” is a cruel bird in the western culture; but if the translator replace the Chinese images with the specific image of “a king” and translate it as “look every inch a king”, they will understand what this idiom really means.

2.4.2 Cultural Similarities

Apart from the common characteristics that idioms of the both languages share, there are some cultural similarities between them. Human experiences and observations of the world are similar in many respects. So, the cultural similarities exist not only between different people but also between different times. There are many cultural universals,

such as general knowledge of nature, the response to human kindness and love, the desire for meaning in life, etc. and determined or affected by these cultural universals, Chinese idioms and English idioms share some cultural similarities.

The following idioms illustrate the similarities in meaning between the two languages, though they use different cultural images:

菩萨保佑	God bless you
老虎头上扑苍蝇	To beard the lion in his den
打开天窗说亮话	To put all cards on the table
赔了夫人又折兵	To throw the helve after the hatchet
钱到公事办，火到猪头烂	Money makes the mare to go.
一朝被蛇咬，三年怕井绳	The burnt child dreads the fire.

When finding the similarities between the idioms of the two languages, we needn't be amazed because people of different nations all live on the same planet and they share many things in common, such as the structures of their brain, their general knowledge of the world, etc. What's more, people from different cultures are not isolated from each other, cross-cultural communication activities never stopped. For example, ancient Chinese didn't have any idioms about Buddhism before it was introduced into China, but now we have many idioms like “观音送子” (p.1010), “阿弥陀佛” (p.1276), “烧香念佛” (p.1276) and “躲得和尚躲不得寺” (p.1302) derived from this religion. And culture itself is an open system that has a powerful capacity of accepting and assimilating foreign cultures. All these factors contribute to the mutual understanding of different people and make it possible for the translation of culture-bound idioms.

2.5 Significance of Chinese Idioms in *Ru Lin Wai Shi*

As a first-rate novelist and poet, Wu Jingzi was a master of the Chinese language. In *Ru Lin Wai Shi*, Wu used and produced many Chinese idioms which deserve the privilege to take precedence over any other element and form of language in revealing Chinese culture.

Furthermore, Chinese idioms are closely connected with Chinese history, social system and living conditions of the nation and so on in content; and in form, these idioms are well presented by their unique formation in nearly every means of expression. These idioms reflect the ways of life of the characters, convey their conceptions of the world and contain the features of Chinese culture. All the idioms are a well integrated part of

the language in the novel and they express people's thoughts and experiences with the fewest words possible but are most impressive and eye-catching. So the great success of *The Scholars* is partly because of its creative use of Chinese idioms. This can be seen clearly in the following four aspects:

- i. The writer makes full use of these idioms so as to give life to every character of the novel. For example, “钱到公事办，火到猪头烂” (p.348) is used to show that the runner wanted to cheat Ma Chun-shang and asked him to offer a bribe. “好男不吃分家饭，好女不穿嫁时衣” (p.276) shows that Miss Lu wanted her husband to pass the metropolitan examinations and become an official.
- ii. The writer uses a lot of Chinese idioms to construct meanings in keeping with his attitude and assessment of people and events. The vulgar expression “放你的狗屁” (p154, p576) is used by the so-called scholars like Senior Licentiate Yan several times and it shows the despise of the writer. Also, “屁滚尿流” (p.474) in chapter 19 shows the writer's disgust about the restaurant people who tried to flatter the official.
- iii. Since idiom is the essence of a language and the concrete expression of culture, the writer's use of these Chinese idioms makes his language powerful, terse and rich in connotation.
- iv. Because of the specialties of Chinese idioms, the language of *Ru Lin Wai Shi* is colorful and full of aesthetic value. For example, some couplets like “瞒天讨价，就地还钱” (p.352) and “公而忘私，国而忘家” (p.144) make his language more memorable.

Though we now know clearly the importance of translating the culture-loaded idioms in rendering the whole book into English, due to the specialty of Chinese idioms and the cultural differences between the two languages, the translation of idioms in this novel from Chinese into English is quite a hard job.

2.6 Methods Adopted in Idiom Translation

Since there are some similarities in the two languages, the translation of idioms can be understandable to the TL readers. But the differences between them are the great difficulties for the translator to overcome. As we have talked about in the forgoing part, idioms are the idiosyncrasies of a language, and they often contain cultural-specific images, which add to the complexity of idiom translation. It is unrealistic for the translator to find an equivalent which can keep the original meaning in the TL. The original meaning of an idiom is usually the totality of the literal meaning of the words,

the meaning of images and the implied meaning. A good translation should be faithful both in the images and meaning. But, sometimes when the three cannot be maintained at the same time, it is the implied meaning that should be kept, because the implied meaning is the spirit of the idiom and it is crucial to the understanding and appreciation of the whole original text.

Traditionally, there are some techniques in idiom translation, and special approaches are used in treating special problems. In the following sections, these techniques and general approaches of idiom translation are listed as: literal translation, free translation, literal translation combined with free translation, using synonymous idioms, literal translation with a note, amplification or omission.

2.6.1 Literal Translation

A faithful translation attempts to reproduce the precise contextual meaning of the original within the constraints of the TL grammatical structures. It “transfers” the cultural words and preserves the grammatical and lexical “abnormality” in the translation. (Newmark, 2001:46) Literal translation does not mean translating word for word, or “dead translation”, but rendering the exact contextual meaning of the original. Because idioms serve as a mirror of the cultural features of a nation and embody a concentrated reflection of various rhetorical devices, the translator must retain as much as possible both the cultural features and stylistic characteristics. Therefore, literal translation is both required and necessary. The proper use of literal translation can retain the vivid and cultural-specific images, national flavor of the original text, thus helping enrich the linguistic expression for the TL.

First let's see some examples of English-Chinese translation of idioms:

Cold war	→ 冷战
Armed to the teeth	→ 武装到牙齿
A gentleman's agreement	→ 君子协定
A cat has nine lives	→ 猫有九命

In *The Scholars*, there are many examples that were translated literally into English:

……将县衙门围得水泄不通，口口声声只要揪出张静斋来打死。

They besieged the *yamen* gate so closely that *not a drop of water could have trickled through*, threatening to drag Mr. Chang out and beat him to death. (p.114-115)

王太守笑道：“可见‘三年清知府，十万雪花银’的话，而今也不甚准确了。”

With a laugh, Prefect Wang rejoined: “It shows that the old saying ‘*three years of good government -- one hundred thousand taels of silver*’ is not always true.” (p.198-199)

“……俗话说得好：‘死知府不如一个活老鼠’……”

“... ‘*A dead prefect is not as good as a live rat.*’...” (p.452-453)

The above examples retain the original images and figures of speech, preserve the original techniques of expressing ideas and, most importantly, the readers can get the profound truths from these vivid images. But because of the fact that the associative meanings of some images in one language do not duplicate with those in another, it is not certain that all of the idioms can be translated into the TL by adopting literal translation. The literal translation sometimes cannot elicit the same association of the TL readers as the source receptor about the same image, thus it may cause confusion or misunderstanding. To solve this problem, many translators resort to free translation.

2.6.2 Free Translation

When the literal translation can't express the implied meaning of an idiom, free translation is often used. “Free translation reproduces the matter without the manner, or the content without the form of the original. Usually it is a paraphrase much longer than the original, a so-called ‘interlingual translation’, often prolix and pretentious, and not translation at all.” (Newmark, 2001:46-47) Based on this definition, free translation is rather a reproduction than merely transferring from the SL to the TL. This method is doomed to suffer the great loss of the artistic forms, the images in the original idiom and aesthetic values, but since “...meaning must be given priority” (Nida, 1982:13), the meaning and spirit of the original text is the most important thing that should be introduced in the process of translation.

Here are some examples of free translation of English idioms:

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| Like a fish out of water. | → 很不自在 |
| To be born with a silver spoon in one's mouth. | → 生于富贵之家 |
| Every dog has his day. | → 人人都有得意的日子 |
| Where there is a will, there is a way. | → 有志者事竟成 |

This method is frequently used by the Yangs in *The Scholars*:

范进因为没有盘费，走去同丈人商议，被胡屠夫一口啐在脸上，骂了一个狗血喷头道：“不要失了你的时了！……”

Fan Jin had no money for the journey. He went to ask his father-in-law to help. Butcher Hu spat in his face, and *poured out a torrent of abuse*. “Don’t be a fool...” (p.68-69)

“……你们原是‘毡袜裹脚靴’，但须要我效劳的来。老实一句，‘打开板壁说亮话’，……”

“...Being in the same line, you are as close as sock and boot. But you’ve got to make it within my power to help. *Let’s be frank and put all the cards on the table...*” (p.352-354)

凌家这两个婆娘，彼此疑惑，你疑惑我多得了主子的钱，我疑惑你多得了主子的钱，争风吃醋，打吵起来。

But the two maids in Ling’s house had grown jealous. Each suspected the other of getting more of their master’s money, and through *jealousy* started scrapping. (p.1110-1111)

Since free translation cannot reproduce the sentence patterns and figures of speech, it should be adopted “only when and where it is really impossible for translators to do literal translation” (刘重德, 1991:53). As a matter of fact, both literal translation and free translation are the two basic translation approaches complimentary to each other, and sometimes the combining of the two is needed to make the translation suit the translator’s purpose.

2.6.3 Literal Translation combined with Free Translation

Both literal translation and free translation have their own limits, so it is impossible for a translator to translate the whole original text using only one method. Therefore, some translators take a flexible attitude in order to avoid stiffness and unintelligibility: when you translate sentences which are similar in structure and/or in figure of speech in the two languages, literal translation should be adopted; otherwise, free translation is used; and when you translate sentences which are partly similar and partly dissimilar, the two methods should be flexibly and cleverly combined. (ibid: 54) This principle also works in the idiom translation, e.g.

Let sleeping dogs lie.

→ 睡狗莫惹，麻烦莫招

Every bird likes its own nest.

→ 鸟爱自己的巢，人爱自己的家

Time tries friend as fire tries gold. → 烈火见真金，日久见人心。

In the Yangs' translation, examples of such methods abound:

王冕一路风餐露宿，九十里大站，七十里小站，一径来到山东济南府地方。

Braving the wind and dew, Wang Mian traveled day after day past large posting stations and small, till he came to the city of Tsinan. (p.20-21)

“风” and “露” are translated literally, but “餐” and “宿” are rendered freely.

“……放着这样一主大财不会发，岂不是‘如入宝山空手回’”？(p.342)

“You've a prize in your hands, yet you don't know how to use it! Isn't that *like going to a treasure-trove and coming away empty-handed?*”

“宝山” is rendered into “treasure-trove” freely, while the rest are dealt with through literal translation.

“……我说二三百两，你就说二三十两，‘戴着斗笠亲嘴，差着一帽子！’”

“When I say two or three hundred taels, you say twenty or thirty! *It's like kissing in straw helmets--the lips are far apart!*” (p.352-353)

The first part of this idiom is an example of literal translation, while the second part is translated freely into “the lips are far apart” which serves as an explanation of the first part.

2.6.4 Using Synonymous Idioms

Borrowing synonymous idioms is also an important method in idiom translation. As human experiences are so much alike that some idioms in different languages are in agreement with each other in connotation and images, it is possible for the translator to use the closest equivalent idioms. “... such an equivalent is not merely one which reflects the lexical content of the original statement but also one which is an equivalent on a rhetorical level of impact and appeal.” (Nida, 1982:11) Therefore, those idioms, which have the same meanings, connotations, image and figure of speech, may be borrowed from each other without much impairment to the cultural message or the contextual consistency, e.g.

Walls have ears. → 隔墙有耳

A friend in need is a friend indeed. → 患难见真交

Misfortunes never come singly. → 祸不单行

Also, we can find a lot of examples in which Chinese idioms are transferred into their English counterparts:

想是翟家这奴才，走下乡狐假虎威着实吓了他一场。

It's all the fault of the rascal Chai. He goes down to the villages *like a donkey in a lion's hide*, and he must have scared this painter fellow out of his wits. (p.16-17)

鲁老先生和夫人因无子息，爱如掌上之珠，……

Because Mr. and Mrs. Lu have no son, the girl is *the apple of their eye*... (p.258-259)

Using an idiom of similar meaning and images means using an idiom in the TL which conveys roughly the same meaning, and, in addition, consists of equivalent lexical items, but this kind of match can actually only be occasionally achieved, because “there are no complete synonyms in the sense of two words having exactly the same denotative and connotative meanings”. (Nida, 2001:159)

2.6.5 Literal Translation with a Note

As we all know, idioms of a certain language can be quite easily known by those who use this language as their native language, but they may be quite difficult for the TL readers to understand or accept because of linguistic, or stylistic or cultural factors. When the translator wants to keep the original flavor and the connotation of the source text at the same time, or when he wants to introduce a new way of expression, or when the allusion contained in the idiom is first introduced to the TL readers, literal translation with a proper note is necessary. Some idioms can be fully understood only when their historical backgrounds or origins, or its relationship with a nation's customs are introduced:

Pandora's box → 潘多拉的魔盒——灾难、麻烦、祸害的根源，指看上去有用却引起祸害的物品。

A note should be added as: 源于希腊神话，女神潘多拉被众神罚下凡间，主神宙斯送她一个盒子，让她带给娶她的男人。打开盒子，所有的罪恶、不幸、灾难等都跑了出来，从而给人类带来无尽的祸害。

Play one's trump card → 打出王牌，使出绝招。

The note should be: 指打桥牌时打出制胜的王牌，转义为采取采取对付敌手最有效的行动。

Examples can also be found in *The Scholars*, and allusions like “塞翁失马”, “鄂君绣被”, “雪夜访普” and “赔了夫人又折兵” are all translated with a long or short note, which will be discussed in detail in chapter IV.

Without the necessary notes, many culture-loaded idioms in the above examples cannot be thoroughly understood by the TL readers or the cultural features cannot be vividly represented in the translated text.

2.6.6 Amplification or Omission

In the process of translation, translators will have to make proper addition or omission of some individual words to better express the original meaning. The choice of amplification or omission is not random and it is necessary to bring out the meaning between the lines in the original text. Either amplification or omission should be used properly without doing any harm to the original meaning.

2.6.6.1 Amplification

The amplification is to add some words or phrases that don't exist in the SL according to the connotation of the idiom and the context in which the idiom is used. It aims to help the TL readers to get a better comprehension of the translated version. Let's see the following examples:

Who has never tasted bitter knows not what is sweet. → 不尝黄连苦，怎知蜂蜜甜。

A rolling stone gathers no moss. → 滚石不生苔，转业不聚财。

当下磕头如捣蒜，只求饶命。(p.1052)

Kowtowing as quickly as a pestle pounding onions, he begged that his life being spared.

凤四老爹道：“这就是水中捞月了。这件事，要高老先生去办。”

Feng said, “You want me to *pluck the moon from the lake--it simply can't be done*. Mr. Gao must make the arrangements.” (p.1220-1221)

陈正公听了这些话，驴头不对马嘴，急了一身的臭汗。

The horse's mouth doesn't fit the donkey's head--the story didn't tally with Whiskers Mao's! Chen broke into a cold sweat. (p.1256-1257)

The underlined phrases or sentences don't make their appearances in the original texts and they are added just to show the implied meanings of these idioms.

2.6.6.2 Omission

Omission, which doesn't mean "cutting the feet to fit the shoes", is also one of the useful techniques often used by translators. By omission, a translator tries to make his translation more expressive and explicit, and to convey the essence of the original text (here the idiom) more effectively. Omission is to omit the words or phrases that are necessary in the source text but not in the target text and therefore should be made just to the point; otherwise, it may spoil the original meaning.

In the idiom translation, a translator may find it difficult to keep the original images or to replace them with similar ones of the TL; he has to omit the original images and reproduces the implied meaning of these idioms. For example:

Pull one's <u>socks</u> up	→	鼓起干劲
In the <u>seventh</u> heaven	→	欢天喜地
A <u>fly</u> in the <u>ointment</u>	→	美中不足
Neither <u>fish</u> nor <u>fowl</u>	→	不伦不类

All the images are omitted or replaced in the translation of the above English idioms. So are the idioms in the following translations from Chinese:

“他本是螟蛉之子，又没中用……” (p.664)

“He's only an *adopted son*, who's never been any good...”

蘧公孙举眼细看，真有沉鱼落雁之容，闭月羞花之貌。 (p.268)

Qu looked at her closely; he saw that *her beauty would put flowers to shame*.

In the above two examples, the images of “螟蛉”, “鱼”, “雁” and “月” are all excluded in the translated version.

Because of the special nature of Chinese idioms, two idioms having the same meaning are often combined into one for better sound and form. Though repetition is an

important rhetoric device of Chinese language, the translator may find it difficult to do the same for the English speakers rarely do so. Therefore, omission should be chosen to avoid unnecessary repetition or tedious redundancy. The translation of “沉鱼落雁之容，闭月羞花之貌” is a case in point, and the translator just translate the second part of the idiom, because though the two parts have different images, they share the same meaning.

The same theory can also be applied to the translation of some Chinese four-character idioms, in which the first two words and the second two repeat each other in meaning:

马二先生正走着，见茶铺里一个油头粉面的女人招呼他吃茶。

A *highly-painted* woman in one of the tea shops invited Ma Chun-shang in. (p.368-369)

景兰江道：“千真万确的事。不然，我也不知道。……”

“It’s *quite true*,” declared Ching. “I wouldn’t have known, but for...” (p.492-493)

汤镇台见他油嘴滑舌……

Tang was disgusted by his *glib tongue*... (p.1070-1071)

Omission is also used in the translation of vulgar expressions, and this will be discussed in Chapter V.

CHAPTER III

LANGUAGE, CULTURE AND TRANSLATION

3.1 Definition of Culture

“Culture” is quite an ambiguous and intriguing concept. The word “culture” originated from the German word “kulture” which means the reclamation of the land and the cultivation of the plants. Later it means the training of people’s body and spirit, especially the training of arts and morality. And now it is such an extremely complicated concept and an enormous subject that, according to some anthropologists, it almost embraces everything in the world, whether material or spiritual. In *Cambridge International Dictionary of English* (1995), it is defined as “the way of life, especially general customs and beliefs of a particular group of people at a particular time”. In *Webster’s Third New International Dictionary* (1976), its definition is “the total pattern of human behavior and its products embodied in thought, speech, action, and artifacts and dependent upon man’s capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations through the use of tools, language, and systems of abstract thought”. *The New Encyclopedia Britannica* (1978, vol.8) defines culture as “behavior peculiar to mankind together with material objects that are part of this behavior. Culture consists of language, ideas, beliefs, customs, codes, institutions, tools, techniques, works of art, rituals, ceremonies and so on”.

Among all the definitions, the one that has been termed as the classic and much quoted was provided by Edward Burnett Taylor in 1871 in his book *Primitive Culture*: “Culture... is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.” (Taylor, 1871:1) This definition served anthropologists well for about 50 years. But with the development of science and society, scholars and experts in anthropological science and other research fields made further study of culture from their own points of view according to the need of their descriptions, thus more and more definitions of culture came into being and now there are at least 200 different kinds of them in all. Actually nearly everyone has his own conception of culture.

From all the definitions of culture above, it is clear that culture is composed of many elements. Now it is often defined and studied in a broad sense or in a narrow sense. In a narrow sense, culture means intellectual and conceptual culture which refers to social ideology, institutions and organizing structures of human beings. In a broad sense, culture refers the whole of material and spiritual wealth that human being has created and

accumulated through millions of years. The culture referred to in this thesis is studied in its broad sense.

3.2 Language and Culture

In *Webster's Third New international Dictionary* (1976), language is defined as “a systemic means of communicating ideas or feelings by the use of conventionalized signs, sounds, gestures or marks having understood meanings”. Language, as “a system of conventional spoken or written symbols by means of which human beings, as members of a social group and participants in its culture, communicate” (*The New Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1978, vol.7), is commonly viewed as a means of communication, of expressing ideas and emotions of human beings; it is a special social behavior and carrier of information used for human communication in a society. Language plays an important role in all the activities of human beings, and it is also seen as one component of culture and the carrier of culture at the same time, because it has three features in relationship with culture as follows:

- i. Language expresses cultural reality because the words people utter refer to common experiences.
- ii. Language embodies cultural reality because the members of a community not only express experience, but also create experiences through language.
- iii. Language symbolizes cultural reality because it is a system of signs that is seen as having itself a cultural value. (Kramsch, 1998:3)

Language comprises human beings' historical and cultural backgrounds, approaches of life and their ways of thinking and modes of living. Being an intrinsic part of culture, language carries and mirrors culture. Language and culture are interrelated with and interdependent of each other, so that understanding one requires the understanding of the other.

“Since culture is defined succinctly as ‘the totality of beliefs and practices of a society’, nothing is of greater strategic importance than the language through which its beliefs are expressed and transmitted and by which most interaction of its members take place.”(Nida, 2001:78) Without culture, language cannot exist and will lose its meaning and significance, while culture uses a language as its means of expression and a language undertakes the important task to carry the cultural information, spread the culture and helps develop it. So the unique culture of a nation fostered over a long history is inevitably contained in its language and the language of a nation transmits its unique and

colorful characteristics of culture. The close relation between language and culture determines that in the process of translation, especially in dealing with cultural differences, attention should be focused upon cultural elements and it is of great significance for the translator to make a study of cultural features and transmit the cultural information embodied in the SL.

3.3 Translation

3.3.1 Definition of Translation

Translation is also a very controversial term to define. In *The New Encyclopedia Britannica* (1978, vol.13), it is “the act or process of rendering what is expressed in one language or set of symbols by means of another language or set of symbols.” It is seen as “a rendering from one language or international system into another, or an art that involves the recreation of a work in another language for readers with a different background.” (*Webster's Third New International Dictionary*, 1976) J. C. Cartford defined it as “the replacement of one language by equivalent textual material in another language.”(Cartford, 1965: 20) Eugene.A. Nida gave it a similar definition as “the closest natural equivalent of the source language message.”(Nida, 1964:166) From his own study of the translation theories from the 17th century to the current time, Lawrence Venuti found that the tradition of translation was based on the value of nationalism and imperialism. So he defined translation as “a process by which the chain of signifiers that constitute the source-language text is replaced by a chain of signifiers in the target language which the translator provides on the strength of an interpretation.”(Venuti, 1995b:17)

3.3.2 Principles of Translation

Different translators or translation theorists have different principles of translation. The principles evolve with the development of translation and new ones are being put forward all the time.

3.3.2.1 Chinese Translators' View of Translation Principles

Early in the Han Dynasty, there were disputes about the principles of “ornament (文)” and “substance (质)” in Buddhist translation. The advocates of the former put emphasis on the rhetoric and smoothness of translation, while those who favored

“substance” stressed that translation should be faithful to the original text without addition or omission. The learned monk and great Buddhist translator in the Tang Dynasty, Xuan Zang (玄奘) placed emphasis on accuracy and the transference of style in translation.

In the Qing Dynasty, Yan Fu (严复), the famous translator in his “Translator’s Preface” to T. H. Huxley’s *Evolution and Ethics* established a three-character standard in translation as Xin (信faithfulness), Da (达expressiveness) and Ya (雅elegance).

He considered the three as the guidelines for the practice of translating, and some regard his principles as the only standard that all translators must observe. For decades, though Yan’s principles caused unending disputes, many translators favored and adhered to it sometimes with slight modifications. For example, Lin Yutang (林语堂) advanced “faithfulness (忠实)” , “fluency (通顺)” and “beautiffulness (美)” as the principle of translation in his essay “On Translation”(1933), and professor Liu Zhongde (刘重德) proposes the three-character standard as “Xin (信faithfulness), Da (达expressiveness) and Qie (切closeness)”.

In 1951, Fu Lei (傅雷) put forward his famous principle of literary translation--“transference of spirit”(传神论) or “resemblance in spirit”(神似) in contrast with the so-called “resemblance in form”(形似). He said: “Translating, in terms of effectiveness, is like copying paintings. What the translator seeks after is similar in spirit rather than similar in form.”(罗新璋,1984:558) By applying it to literary translation, Fu uplifted literary translation to the height of aesthetics and arts.

In 1961, Qian Zhongshu (钱钟书) proposed his famous principle of “sublimation”(化境) and further emphasized the importance of reproduction of artistic effect in literary translation. Qian argued that in a “sublimation” translation, “on one hand there should be no trace of unnaturalness and stiffness of language resulting from the differences between the two languages; on the other hand, the original flavor should be retained.” (ibid: 696) Qian’s principle used to be regarded as the highest objective of literary translation which every translator should try his best to achieve.

3.3.2.2 Translation Principles in the Western Countries

As early as in the 1st century B.C., a translator and orator, Marcus Tullius Cicero pointed out that a translator should keep the same ideas and the forms or the “figures” of thought, and preserve the general style and force of language, that is to be equivalent in style.(申雨平, 2002:157)

In the late 1890s, Alexander Fraser Tytler put forward the famous three “laws of translation” in his *Essay on the Principle of Translation*:

- i. The translation should give a complete transcript of the ideas of the original work.
- ii. The style and manner of writing should be of the same character with that of the original.
- iii. The translation should have the ease of the original composition.

What Tytler emphasized is not the linguistics of the source text, but the correspondence of the target text and the source text in theme, style, expression and other aspects. His principle has exerted a tremendous influence on the succeeding scholars.

The famous America translator of the Bible, Eugene A. Nida, gives two types of equivalence: formal and dynamic (the latter was changed to “functional” by Nida himself in 1986). In one of his major translation works, he stated that the formal equivalence “focuses attention on the message itself... in such a translation one is concerned with such correspondences as poetry to poetry, sentence to sentence, and concept to concept.” (Nida, 1964:159) “Dynamic equivalence” is based on the principle of equivalent effect, and it contains the following two aspects:

- i. The translation should produce the same effect on the TL reader as the original produced on the SL readers.
- ii. The intended receptor’s response is the only criterion for the assessment of the quality of a translation.

In Nida’s theory, “dynamic equivalence” is defined with “receptors’ response” as its nature, and it has been widely adopted by the Bible translators since the 1960s. The British translator Peter Newmark, formulated his concepts of “communicative translation” and “semantic translation”, which in a sense were similar to Nida’s “formal equivalence” and “dynamic equivalence”

Based on Friedrich Schleiermacher’s theory, Lawrence Venuti stated that there exist two translation strategies: foreignization and domestication. In Venuti’s view, Nida’s translation theory contained an ethnocentric violence, and “dynamic equivalence” was actually “an egregious euphemism for the domesticating translation method and the cultural agenda it conceals.” (Venuti, 1995b:23) Venuti advocates that domesticating translation must be replaced with foreignizing translation, because he thought a good translation should reveal the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text and resist the ethnocentric violence and cultural hegemonism in translation and only

foreignizing translation can do this.

3.4 Approaches to the Transfer of Culture

In recent years, there is a growing trend to regard translation as an act of cultural communication and the study on culture translation flourishes. Since language is seen as both a kind of expression and a component of culture, the translation of language materials is the process of turning the cultural contents in one language into another. Thus, the approaches to the transfer of culture in translation are put forward and emphasized.

3.4.1 Translation, Language and Culture

Culture is very important to the effective bilingual transfer; different culture forms will definitely give rise to cultural difference and obstacle, and the effectiveness and smoothness of the message channel may be hindered. So the culture factors play an essential and critical role in a bilingual transfer which is mainly done by translation. The function of translation is to promote cross-culture communication. The close inter-relationship between culture and language plays an important part in the translation.

As a bridge-builder of different languages and cultures, translators should realize the significance of language and culture in the process of translation and try to reproduce the culture carried by the SL in the TL. The translation should aim not only at rendering of one language into another, but also at truthful representation of the cultural elements of the SL in the TL. A translator should sharpen his sense towards the cultural elements in his translation practice so as to bring the source message into full play in the TL. As Nida said, "For truly successful translation, biculturalism is even more important than bilingualism since words and expressions only have meaning in terms of the cultures they function," (Nida, 2001:82) the successful translator is required to take into full account the relationship between culture, language and translation. Nobody could afford to ignore the cultural differences between the SL and the TL in his translation procedure. In fact, more and more translators are aware of the significance of taking cultural factors into consideration in their translation practice and study.

3.4.2 Strategies of Translation

The important task of all the translators is to promote the mutual understanding of people with different cultures, so it is inevitable for translators to meet with all difficulties in handling cultural differences in the challenging and demanding job of translation. To

solve the urgent problem of cultural differences, different translators have different strategies. The German philosopher and theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher argued that “there are only two. Either the translator leaves the author in peace, as much as possible, and moves the reader towards him; or he leaves the reader in peace, as much as possible, and moves the author towards him.” (Venuti, 1995b:19) And these two different strategies are defined as domestication and foreignization by Venuti from a cultural political standpoint.

3.4.2.1 Foreignization

Foreignization is “a term used by Lawrence Venuti to designate the type of translation in which a target text is produced which deliberately breaks target conventions by retaining something of the foreignness of the original.” (Schuttleworth & Cowie, 1997: 59) Among all those who advocate foreignization, Venuti is the most famous. He said, foreignization is “an ethnodeviant pressure on those values to register the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text, sending the reader abroad”, and it “signifies the difference of the foreign text, yet only by disrupting the cultural codes that prevail in the target language.” (Venuti, 1995b:20) In his view, “A translated text should be the site where a different culture emerges, where a reader get a glimpse of a cultural other, and resistance, a translation strategy based on an aesthetic of discontinuity, can best preserve that difference, that otherness, by reminding the reader of the gains and losses in the translation process and the unbridgeable gaps between cultures.” (ibid: 306) In foreignization, the translator strives to preserve as much as possible the alien flavor of the SL, and when the readers of the TL want to read the translation version of a foreign language material, they must be ready to face what is unfamiliar and exotic. Thus, by keeping the cultural images and difference of the source text, the target text can not only contribute to a better understanding of different culture of the TL readers, but also facilitate the readers’ adoption of new things, both linguistic and cultural.

“Lingual foreignization can be anatomized into three different levels: words, grammar and style, whose foreignization is closely associated with the cultures concerned.” (李玉良, 2002:1) But, in this thesis the author’s study is mainly concerned with the foreignization of the idiom translation.

3.4.2.2 Reasons for Adopting Foreignization

Schleiermacher acknowledged that most translation was through the strategy of domestication, an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target-language cultural

values, bringing the author back home. But he much preferred a foreignizing strategy, an ethnodeviant pressure on those values to register the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text, sending the reader abroad. (Baker Mona, 1998:241-242)

For people who favor the foreignizing strategy in translation, they mostly state their reasons as follows:

- i. It is necessary to introduce foreign cultures to the TL readers, because it is the readers' purpose for reading translation works.
- ii. Transferring the SL culture to the TL culture helps enrich the TL culture and mode of expression.
- iii. Translation should function as a communicative medium and promote cultural exchanges.
- iv. If the translation cannot reflect the phenomenon of the SL, it cannot be called "faithful to the source language".
- v. The translator should have confidence in the intelligence and imagination of the TL readers in understanding and appreciating the cultural differences and the foreignness. (郭建中, 2000a:279)

3.4.2.3 Domestication

Domestication is "a term used by Venuti to describe the translation strategy in which a transparent, fluent style is adopted in order to minimize the strangeness of the foreign text for target language readers." (Schuttleworth & Cowie, 1997: 43-44) And Venuti regarded it as "an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target-language cultural values, bringing the author back home." (Venuti, 1995b:20) Eugene A. Nida is a representative of those who advocate domestication. According to Nida's concept of "dynamic equivalence", "a translation of dynamic equivalence aims at complete naturalness of expression... and tries to relate the receptor to modes of behavior relevant within the context of his own culture." (Nida, 1964:165) And "dynamic equivalence" is actually "an egregious euphemism for the domesticating translation method and the cultural agendas it conceals". (Venuti, 1995b:118) In the light of Nida's "functional equivalence", not only should the form of the translation accord with the norms of the TL, but also the cultural factors should be dealt with in line with the canons of the TL. Nida and other advocates of domestication prefer to bring the foreign (source) culture closer to the reader in the TL, and they are in favor of the translation in which the TL culture is exploited in order to make the translated texts natural, intelligible and familiar for the TL readers.

3.4.2.4 Reasons for Adopting Domestication

For Nida and those who favor the domesticating strategy in the process of translation, they usually hold the following reasons:

- i. It is not only unrealistic but also dangerous to try to force the linguistic and cultural norms of the SL into the TL. A successful translation should overcome not only language obstacles but also cultural ones.
- ii. Translation is a kind of cross-cultural communication, so one of the translator's responsibilities is to avoid cultural conflicts which may lead to various kinds of misunderstandings. Hence, the translator should carefully deal with the cultural connotations beneath facial expressions and try to narrow the cultural gaps so as to facilitate better understanding.
- iii. If the content and form of the translated message fall within the scope of the intended readers' knowledge of the world, they may understand the translation easier and better. Therefore, the translator should try every means to transfer the SL culture to the TL culture.
- iv. Since the translated message may not have the same function to the TL readers as that to the SL readers because of the knowledge and experiences of the TL readers, the translator should not force them to understand and accept the SL culture. (郭建中, 2000a:279)

3.4.3 Determining Factors in the Choice of Strategies

The controversy between domestication and foreignization is the focus of the continual controversies in translation and it has a long history both in China and in the West. Traditionally, it is seen as the controversy about literal translation and free translation, which cares little about cultural features of the source text. Actually, the basic divergence of this controversy consists in whether the bias is in favor of the SL readers or of the TL readers. The author of this paper holds that these two strategies are a dialectical unity of contradictions in general, the use of one shouldn't repel the other, instead, they are frequently used interchangeably, supplementary to each other, connected with each other and penetrated into each other. Both of them are valuable when the four variant factors -- the motivation of the writer, the genre of the source text, the purpose of the translation, and the response of the readers are taken into consideration.

3.4.3.1 Motivation of the Writer

To a great extent, the motivation of a writer conditions which approach should be applied. When the writer wants to introduce the history, culture or philosophy of his nation, the translator should adopt the foreignizing strategy to reproduce the writer's motivation in his translated version. For example, Cao Xueqin (曹雪芹) showed us nearly all kinds of Chinese traditional culture in his great work *Hong Lou Meng*. The Yangs' rendition, *A Dream of Red Mansions*, is translated through the strategy of foreignization. The fact that the Yangs' version enjoys great popularity both at home and abroad owes a lot to their excellent reproduction of the writer's motivation.

3.4.3.2 Genres of the Source Text

For different genres of the source texts, different approaches can be adopted. For example, in dealing with the translation of political, historical, editorial or philosophical texts, foreignization should be adopted because the aim of these materials is to introduce cultures. While texts of practical purposes like notices, bulletins, news reports, advertisements and popular stories should be translated mainly through the approach of domestication, for these texts aim to achieve wider readership and readability.

3.4.3.3 Purpose of the Translation

If the translator is translating the source text for a specific purpose, for example, to introduce some ideas, his major concern will go to the fluency and readability of the translation in order to avoid obscurity and ambiguity. In such case, domestication is preferable. When Yan Fu translated T. H. Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics and Other Essays*, his intended readers were scholars and feudal bureaucrats, so he adopted the strategy of domestication to introduce the advanced ideas and technology and his translation was full of smack of Tongcheng School (桐城学派).

3.4.3.4 Readers' Response

Some translators hold the view that the ultimate judges of a translation are the readers, so they think it is important for the translator to have a clear idea of whom he is translating for. Depending on the different groups of readers, the translator can decide which kind of strategy he may adopt. When the readers expect an appreciation of foreign art and cultures, the translator should adopt foreignization; and for the readers who just

read for entertainment, the translator should make his translation easy to understand through domestication.

Of course, there are some other factors, like the patronage and the trend of translation, which affect the choice of translation strategies. Limited by space, we will go to any length on this matter.

CHAPTER IV

TRANSLATING THE VARIOUS TYPES OF CHINESE IDIOMS IN *THE SCHOLARS*

“Language is the symbolic representation of a people, and it comprises their historical and cultural backgrounds as well as their approaches to life and their ways of living and thinking.”(邓炎昌, 1989:3) So is the Chinese language, which carries thousands of years of civilization of Chinese people. As a result, many Chinese classics naturally reflect Chinese culture which is quite different from that of other nations. And the introduction of Chinese classics to foreigners is not only the inheritance and development of Chinese traditional culture, but also a contribution to the world culture. In this field, Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang have done a great job. The Yangs have introduced to the western readers many Chinese classics, most of which are translated into English, and the English version of *Ru Lin Wai Shi--The Scholars* is one of their representative translations of Chinese classics.

As we have talked about in the forgoing parts, culture is given priority in translation now. The traditional study about the methods of idiom translation cannot embody the translators' attitude to culture. So the author of this thesis studies the Yangs' strategies of idiom translation in terms of cultural translation.

The Yangs used different strategies in the translation process and their translation is faithful both in content and in style, so the English version is worth reading, appreciating, and studying, which draws great attention both at home and abroad. They have successfully translated the idioms of *The Scholars* and with the help of their excellent translation, English readers may have a good time appreciating the content, beauty, irony, humor and other cultural information. The strategies and thoughts of the Yang's idiom translation deserve a detailed research in order to benefit the study of idiom translation in Chinese classics, so, in the following parts of this chapter, the author selects some typical Chinese idioms from *The Scholars* and then classifies them into six types to analyze, though there might be some overlaps in the classification.

4.1 Chinese Set Phrases (成语)

Although Set Phrases are regarded as the equivalence of idioms by some linguists, in this thesis they refer to those idioms which are generally composed of four Chinese characters (or syllables), and they are in an overwhelming majority, accounting for nearly

90% of the total number of the Chinese Set Phrases, so they are often called “四字成语”(Set Phrases of Four Characters). The reason why they are in so large numbers may be closely related with the rule and tradition of Chinese word formation, rhythm and Chinese poetic forms. They are fixed combinations which function as syntactic elements in the sentences. These four-character set phrases are passed down from generation to generation. Embedded with the wisdom of the Chinese people, they are the best culture indicators and can reveal the Chinese phonetic features in the finest way because of their neat structure. They stress the meaning by rhyme, parallelism and repetition, and they are pleasing to both eyes and ears. This unique form is rarely found in any other language. The conciseness and vividness of set phrases make them suitable for formal occasions, so people frequently use them to make their speeches and writings more expressive and powerful.

Though most set phrases have four characters, there are some exceptions. A small number of Chinese set phrases consist of more or fewer than four characters: some have two or three Chinese characters while some are as many as ten or more than that. For example, “接风 (p.1080)”, “附骥尾 (p.280)”, “钻狗洞 (p.524)” and “打秋风 (p.786)” are composed of two or three Chinese characters each, while “沉鱼落雁之容, 闭月羞花之貌 (p.268)” consists of twelve Chinese characters. Long or short, they have been invented and accepted through long usage and usually are rich in cultural connotations. So the translator should try his best to reproduce these cultural connotations by using the strategy of foreignization:

但世人一见了功名, 便舍着性命去求他, 及到手之后, 味同嚼蜡。

Men will risk their lives in search for them; yet once they have them within their grasp, *the taste is no better than chewed tallow.* (p.2-3)

叫一声“请!”, 一齐举箸, 却如风卷残云一般, 早去了一半。

At the signal to begin, they fell to with their chopsticks, like *a whirlwind scattering wisp of cloud.* And half the food had gone. (p.40-41)

……换了蓝布衣服, 草帽草鞋, 寻一条小路, 忙忙如丧家之狗, 急急如漏网之鱼, 连夜找路回省城去了。

Then Zhang and Fan changed into blue cloth gowns, straw hats and sandals, and, stealthily as *stray dogs*, swiftly as *fish escaping from the net*, fled back to the provincial capital. (p.114-115)

“味同嚼蜡”, “风卷残云”, “丧家之狗” and “漏网之鱼” are good examples of foreignization. Since both Chinese and English have the same images of “蜡”, “风”, “云”,

“家”，“狗”，“网”and “鱼”，these cultural similarities and universals lay a basis for the mutual understanding between two different language readers. By using foreignization in translating idioms, the goal of communication is achieved. Thus, the cultural messages and the original images are vividly and explicitly maintained, and all the four idioms above-said are not difficult for the TL readers to comprehend.

Examples using the strategy of foreignization abound in *The Scholars*, and idioms in the following sentences are just a few of them:

乡村人各各安居乐业。

Once more the villagers could *live at peace, enjoying the fruits of their labor*. (p.26-27)

那船上管船的艄公，押船的朝奉，面面相觑，束手无策。

The helmsman and salt merchant's clerk *wrung their hands in dismay*, and *looked at each other helplessly*. (p.1050-1051)

那苗酋吓得魂不附体，忙调两百苗兵，带了标枪，前去抵敌。

The chieftain's soul nearly flew from his body in fear. He hastily ordered two hundred spearmen to hold the enemy at bay. (p.1060-1061)

他若不情愿时，任你王侯将相，大捧的银子送他，他正眼儿也不看。

If he was not in mood, then no matter whether you are *prince, duke, general or minister*, or what silver you heaped on him, he would not even look at you. (p.1312-1313)

However, the cultural differences exist between two peoples for many reasons we talked about in Chapter III. The translator must take the readers' acceptability into consideration and introduce the unique cultural information to the TL readers without causing cultural misunderstanding or confusion, and in this case, domestication is a good alternative. For instance:

南京的风俗……这菜一定是鱼，取“富贵有余”的意思。

The custom in Nanjing ... is cooking a fish, *which stands for fortune*. (p.662-663)

In Chinese, “鱼” and “余” are homophones, so “鱼” (fish) is often used to stand for “余” or “富余”(rich) in fortune, but it's hard to keep this characteristic in English and the usual way is by using the domestication to transfer its implicated meaning.

在街上，余大先生道：“表弟，我们县里，礼义廉耻，一总都灭绝了！……”

“Cousin,” said Yu You-da on the way, “this district of our county has no *sense of morality* left! ...” (p.1158-1159)

“礼”(Li), “义”(Yi), “廉”(Lian), “耻”(Chi) are the doctrines of Ru School (儒家学派) which were accepted and honored in the feudal society in ancient China, and the foreigners don't know much of these Chinese feudal moral ideologies. So if this set phrase is introduced through the foreignizing method (with notes), the translated version will be verbose and the TL readers will be at a loss about the real meaning of this set phrase, thus causing a failure in translation.

Other examples of using domesticating method in translating Chinese Set Phrases are:

揭去方巾，见那新娘子辛小姐，真有沉鱼落雁之容，闭月羞花之貌。

When the bride's red veil was removed, he saw that Miss Xin the bride was *lovely enough to outshine the moon and put the flowers to shame*. (p.500-501)

……胡屠夫一口啐在脸上，骂了一个狗血喷头道：“不要失了你的时了！……”

...Butcher Hu spat in his face, and *poured out a torrent of abuse*. “Don't be a fool...” (p.68-69)

……将这两本书拿到灯下一看，不觉眉花眼笑，手舞足蹈的起来。

... And when he studied the two volumes under the lamp he could have *jumped for joy*. (P.520-521)

Chinese Set Phrases are the cream and essence of Chinese culture and their meanings are often implicated because of their concise forms; most of them have historical and cultural backgrounds, such as “狐假虎威 (p.16)”, “雪夜访普 (p.108)”, “新婚燕尔 (p.274)”, “标梅之候 (p.498)”, “塞翁失马 (p.978)”, “南柯一梦 (p.1280)” and “桃源避世 (p.1328)”, so the translator mustn't infer the meaning of the idiom from the separate words that make it up, and he should have a profound understanding of the implications of set phrases and be a master of material and spiritual culture of the SL. Without knowledge of their origins, it will be quite difficult to understand and translate them. Such set phrases are classified as allusions and will be studied in the section right below.

4.2 Allusions (典故)

An allusion is “an expression designed to call something to mind without mentioning

it explicitly; an indirect or passing reference” in *The New Oxford Dictionary of English* (2001). Both English and Chinese abound in allusions, which have a lot in common. People embellish their speech or writing with reference to characters or events from their history, legends, literature, religion and so on. Allusions not only make the language vivid and profuse, but make communication much more successful. Yet if we don't know much about their origins, they are not easy to understand, let alone appreciation. We know the sources of idioms vary greatly, and most Chinese allusions originated from myths, legends and fables, historical events, religious classics or stories, etc. and they reflect special Chinese ancient culture. Some allusions come from other sources, like names of places, recreations, games and so on.

Some Chinese allusions like “雪夜访普 (p.108)”, “退避三舍 (p.250)” and “赔了夫人又折兵 (p.1230)” emphasize the historical events. The culturally loaded images create many barriers to the translator and they are often very difficult to be completely understood by foreigners who know little about their origins.

The cultural backgrounds of these allusions are little known by the English people who are therefore unable to deduce the same associative meaning from the translation. As allusions result in the problem of “cultural gap”, André Lefevere thought they were developed by a specific culture--“A word or phrase that is symbolic for an emotion or a state of affairs.”(Lefevere, 1992c:56) And he thought the literal meaning of words or phrases can be translated without much trouble, but “the link between the two, which is so intricately bound up with the foreign culture itself, is much harder to translate.” (ibid:56-57) Solutions to the problem in dealing with foreign culture reflect the translator's strategy and thought. In their translation process, the Yangs knew the “cultural gap”, so they not only transferred the denotative cultural information but also made clear the connotation of the culture-loaded allusions; they reproduced the national flavor of the SL, made the writer's intention known and helped the English readers understand the implied meaning of most allusions.

Some allusions are so frequently used that they lose their original meanings and the use of their connotation overpasses their original meanings. People just take them as the set language elements and neglect their origins when they meet and use such idioms. For example, most Chinese know the allusions like “三十六计，走为上计”，“出其不意，攻其不备” and “门墙”，“桃李” without probing into their origins.

But in dealing with the following allusions, the Yangs used the strategy of foreignization with footnotes, and they not only transferred the denotative cultural information, but also reproduced the connotative meaning of these allusions.

洪武私行到他家，就如“雪夜访普”的一般。

One day Emperor Hung Wu went to his house in disguise, just like *the emperor in the old story who called on his friend one snowy night*. (p.108-109)

Through foreignization, the allusion is transferred directly into *the emperor in the old story who called on his friend one snowy night*. The English readers can understand well this allusion from the effective translation with detailed footnote given: *The first emperor of the Song Dynasty, Chao Kuang-yin (960-975), called on prime minister, Chao Pu, at night to discuss state affairs with him.*

“……朋友之情，更胜于男女！你不看别的，只说鄂君绣被的故事。”

“... the love of friends is stronger! Just look at the story of *the Lord of Ngo and his embroidered coverlet*.” (p.732-733)

To make the TL readers understand clearly the viewpoint of the speaker about friendship, the Yangs added a footnote as:

The Lord of Ngo was devoted to a singer in the state of Yue, and covered him with an embroidered coverlet. Later this incident was used as a classical allusion to describe love between men.

却自己叹道：“人说‘塞翁失马’，未知是祸是福。”

“When *the old man at the frontier lost his horse*, he thought it might be a good thing.” sighed Xiao. (p.978-979)

“塞翁失马” is translated into “*the old man at the frontier lost his horse*”, and the translators gave us a detailed footnote of this allusion. From this, English readers can know both the denotation, and the connotative cultural information of this Chinese allusion. The note is:

An allusion to a story popular for more than 2,000 years in China. When an old man lost his horse, neighbors condoled with him.

“This may be a good thing,” he said.

The horse came back with another horse, and the old man's neighbors congratulated him.

“This may prove unlucky,” he said.

When his son, who liked the new horse, rode it and broke his leg, once more the neighbors expressed their sympathy.

“This may turn out for the best,” said the old man.

And, indeed, just then the Huns invaded the country and most able-bodied men were conscripted and killed in battle; but thanks to his broken leg the old man's son survived.

The little story can not only help the English readers understand the connotation of the original material, but also arouse their interest.

The above three allusions, all of which are interesting stories, are all translated through foreignization with notes. The advantage of this method is that allusions can be introduced to foreigners without losing their native language forms and original cultural contents. Thus the TL readers won't find it difficult to understand them and the notes are by no means gilded lily.

But when the origin of the allusion is quite long or the text is too short, or the translator doesn't want to make his translation rigid or the cohesion of the text interrupted, the origin and even the images of the allusion may be omitted deliberately. Let's see the following example:

严贡生慌了，自心里想：“这两件事都是实的，倘若审断起来，体面上须不好看。
'三十六计，走为上计'！”

He was panic-stricken, and thought, "Both complaints are true, and if I have to appear in court I shall lose face. *Better make myself scarce.*" (p.118-119)

“三十六计，走为上计” may be translated into *Of the thirty-six stratagems, the best is to quit* with a note, but even many learned Chinese don't know what all the *thirty-six stratagems* are, so there is no need to introduce all the stratagems. The Yangs just deleted the former part of this allusion and translated only the connotation which lies in the second part. The following allusions are dealt with in more or less the same way:

两公子将此书略翻了几页，称赞道：“贤侄少年如此大才，我等俱要退避三舍了。”

"You are a young genius, nephew!" declared his uncle after turning a few pages. "We are none of us up to you." (p.250-251)

给谏道：“恁大年纪，尚不曾娶，也是男子汉，‘探梅之候’了。但这事也在我身上。”

"It's high time you were," said his patron. "You've reached the age when a man should marry. I will find a wife for you." (p.498-499)

The above three allusions are treated as if they were just conventional phrases which have already lost their original cultural senses to many people. If they are translated with

the strategy of foreignization, long and detailed footnotes or endnotes must be added to avoid confusion, but the consistency of the text may be broken.

4.3 Proverbs (谚语)

Proverb is “a brief epigrammatic saying that is a popular byword; a oft-repeated pithy and ingeniously turned maxim.” (*Webster’s Third New International Dictionary*, 1976) In *Cihai* (《辞海》, 1989), proverb is defined as a kind of “short popular phrases and sentences which are pregnant with profound meanings among the common people and most of them reflect the experiences in people’s lives and struggles.” In *Longman Dictionary of Modern English Dictionary* (1999), the definition of proverb is “a brief familiar maxim of folk wisdom, usually composed in form, often involving a bold image and frequently a jingle that catches the memory.” Proverbs are often incisive, pithy and vivid, but they often contain the “folk wisdom” and “well-known factors or truths” which expound the profound truths with the simple matters in our daily life. (邓炎昌, 1989:47) Like the other kinds of idioms, proverb is an integrated part of Chinese language and culture. Proverbs provide the sauce to relish the meat of ordinary speech, and teem with lessons and morals in a short pithy form. Chinese proverbs enjoy great popularity and are widely used.

Anyone interested in languages will recognize the value in knowing the proverbs in a language. Men of letters prefer to use proverbs to add variety and force to their writings, with the purpose of making their language more vivid and expressive, more persuasive and appealing. Wu Jingzi, as a novelist and master of language, employed many proverbs as a device to portray his fictional characters and make his language succinct and vivid.

For example, some proverbs used in *The Scholars* not only make the characters vivid and lively, but also leave a deep impression on the readers:

秦老汉劝道：“……自古道：‘灭门的知县’，你和他拗些甚么？”

Put in Old Qin, “...The proverb says, ‘*Magistrates can ruin families.*’ Why ask for trouble?” (p.14-15)

This proverb not only shows that magistrate, even of a county in ancient China, was in charge of the fate of ordinary people, but also bespeaks that Old Qin was afraid: if Wang Mian refused them, he might suffer a lot from that.

龙三道：“老爷，你又说错了。‘夫妻无隔夜之仇’，我怪你怎的？”

Long San said, “How can you say such a thing, husband? *Nothing can come between*

husband and wife. How could I be angry with you? ” (p.704 -705)

This proverb shows that Long San, in order to get some money from the prior, pretended to be a woman (the prior's wife). When finishing the English version, the TL readers will know for sure how shameless the rascal was.

Proverbs exist ubiquitously numerous in almost every language, and dissimilarities between two languages or two cultures are apparent. They, together with some other types of idioms, are regarded as the most ancient and valuable manifestations of human culture. The proper use of them can help the writer or speaker to express the commonly shared ideas and beliefs, and unfold before receptors an enchanting and colorful picture of that people's geography, history, social organization, views and attitudes. Owing to the different living conditions and other factors, Chinese people and English people have different ways of thinking, which adds national colors to their proverbs. Compared with English proverbs, Chinese proverbs have the following distinct features:

- i. An immense number. Chinese seems to have a proverb or saying for almost all conceivable situations--whether they be human-nature situations or human-human situations;
- ii. The distinctive Chinese quality of many of the sayings.
- iii. Reflecting social qualities and the feelings of those deprived and oppressed.
- iv. Having more proverbs with the feature of social harmony, or brotherhood, or “doing good”. (邓炎昌, 1989:48-49)

Undoubtedly, the differences between them are predominant. A sensitive translator must be aware of these differences and try to bridge the gaps.

Proverbs embrace a concentrated reflection of various aspects of culture. Being meaningful to any discourse, they are meant to contribute clarity, force, and beauty to speeches or writings. Closely connected with people's daily life, proverbs reflect their wills, feelings and morality. They not only show the various experiences, insight and wisdom gained by common people, but also provide them with inspiration and didactical information. Therefore, the translator should make clear where the specialty of the proverbs lies and tries to maintain the specialty in his translation by preserving the original images of the proverbs. So the TL readers can understand the other people's values, ways of thinking, beliefs and so on. The following translations of the Yangs are faithful both in meanings and in images.

“……但自古道：‘公而忘私，国而忘家。’……”

“...But as the proverb says, ‘*Public business comes before private affairs. The state comes before the family.*’...” (p.144-145)

王太守道：“自古道：‘休官莫问子。’……”

“The proverb says: *Don't consult your son on the question of retirement...*” (p.196-197)

卜诚道：“郭先生，自古‘一斗米养个恩人，一石米养个仇人’，这是我们养他的不是了！”

“Mr. Guo,” said Pu Cheng, “you know the proverb: *A peck of rice wins you a friend; a bushel wins you a foe.* It was a mistake to feed him so long.” (p.548-549)

“……自古道：‘家贫不是贫，路贫贫杀人。’……”

“... And as the proverb says, *Poverty at home isn't poverty, but poverty on the road is killing...*” (p.590-591)

“……自古道：‘公门里好修行’，……”

“...The proverb says, *The yamen is a good place to do good deeds...*” (p.630-631)

张俊民道：“‘熟读王叔和，不如临症多’。……”

“*A thorough knowledge of Wang Shuhe is not as good as experience of many diseases,*” quoted the doctor. (p.764-765)

盖宽道：“老爹，‘世情看冷暖，人面逐高低’！……”

“Why, uncle,” replied Gai Kuan, “Didn't you know the proverb? *Warm feelings may turn to coldness. Men are drawn to prosperity but not to adversity...*” (p.1322-1323)

Through the foreignization strategy, the Yangs not only ensure their translation keeping the vivid images and indigenous flavor of the original idioms, but also inform the TL readers of another culture, and achieve cultural communication between the readers of both languages. The English readers can fully appreciate how we Chinese respond to the original text.

As proverbs are terse, pithy and full of images which contain thoughts, opinions and other cultural elements of a nation, the translator must go into the depths, dig out the true sense, and use the foreignization strategy to keep and transmit the meaning and the cultural information of the proverbs. Through his study of the translation of proverbs in *The Scholars*, the author of this thesis finds that some proverbs are dealt with through the strategy of domestication. Two examples are shown in the following sentence:

“……我也只愿得无事，落得‘河水不洗船’。但做事也要‘打蛇打七寸’才妙。你先生请上裁！”

“...I'm just as anxious as you are to avoid trouble, and *I don't like seeing any man*

ruined. But you've got to act quickly in this, Sir. So I hope you'll consider what I've said." (p.350-351)

Here, the images “河水”, “船”, “蛇” and “七寸” of the above two idioms are all ignored, and the translators just showed the readers the implied meanings of the two proverbs.

4.4 Common Sayings (俗语)

There are also various definitions for Suyu (俗语) which is called common saying or folk adage in English (hereinafter Common Saying), and the one given in *The Modern Chinese Dictionary* (1996) is quite widely accepted: “the widespread popular and stereotyped phrases, which are terse and figurative and most created by the working people to reflect their wishes and life experiences. For example, ‘天下无难事, 只怕有心人’ means ‘Nothing is difficult in the world for those who set their minds to it’.” (《现代汉语词典》, 1984) Though most Common Sayings, characterized by colloquialism, are created by the masses and spread among them, they have their origins in famous poems, myths and historical events etc. They live to this day by passing from mouth to mouth or through documentary records.

Compared with Chinese Set Phrases, they are much more vivid in images, looser in syntax and more apparent in meanings, for example, “粮不粮莠不莠 (p.52)” and “不粮不莠” have the same meaning that is “neither fish, flesh no fowl”, but “粮不粮莠不莠” is regarded as a Common Saying for its loose syntax and the latter is considered to be a set phrase for it is more succinct and with literary color. So what is true aforementioned is true of “精益求精而求其精” (p.462) and “精益求精”.

Common Sayings share quite a few features with proverbs. For example, both of them are the result of collective wisdom over ages; they consist of more than four Chinese characters; being colloquial is their common predominant stylistic feature, and they enjoy widespread popularity among the common people. That is why some linguists prefer to put them into the same category. But Common Sayings are more informal, more descriptive and less refined than proverbs, while proverbs focus on a certain idea or thought with sententious warning and instructive meaning. Also Common Sayings and proverbs are different in that the former usually consists of only one clause which is often used as a dependent clause of a sentence, while proverbs are often used as independent sentences and may have two rhymed clauses with parallelism as a dominant feature.

“……我们没来由今日为他得罪严老大，‘老虎头上扑苍蝇’怎的？落得做好好先生！”

“...Why should we offend Senior Licentiate Yan for her sake? *Only fools catches flies on a tiger's head.* Much better say nothing and offend nobody.” (p.160-161)

Though the English idiom *To beard the lion in his den* has a similar meaning to “老虎头上扑苍蝇”，the Yangs didn't use this synonymous idiom because they wanted to keep the original cultural images “老虎”and “苍蝇” and the metaphor used by the writer, and their translation also contains the vernacular taste which stresses the commonness and colloquialism of this saying. The Yangs reproduced the images so vividly that the TL readers can understand the context of this sentence and the characteristics of the speaker through their translation.

胡屠夫道：“不要失了你的时了！你自己只觉得中了一个相公，就‘癞蛤蟆想吃起天鹅肉’来！……”

“Don't be a fool!” he roared. “Just passing one examination has turned you head completely--you're *like a toad trying to swallow a swan!* ...” (p.68-69)

Butcher Hu regarded the success of examination as a swan, which is beautiful and very hard to catch, while his son-in-law was regarded as a toad which is ugly and stupid. From this common saying we can see how Butcher Hu despised and insulted Fan Jin. Though the English readers may not be familiar with such images, they can get the connotation of this Common Saying through the Yangs' outstanding translation.

The following Common Sayings are all translated in the same way as the above two examples:

“……常言道得好：‘三年被毒蛇咬了，如今梦见一条绳子也是害怕。’”

“*A man who has been bitten by a poisonous snake will be frightened if he dreams of a rope three years after!*” (p.286-287)

“……我这里‘娃子不哭奶不胀，为什么把别人家的棺材拉在自己门口哭？’”

“*If the baby doesn't cry, the milk doesn't flow.* Why lug someone else's coffin to your door and cry over it?” (p.1098-1099)

“……他若是要二分开外，我就是‘羊肉不曾吃，空惹一身膻’，倒不如干这刀把儿了！”

“But if he wanted two percent or more, *I'd miss the goat flesh and just get the smell of the goat!* That wouldn't be worth my while.” (p.1254-1255)

Since foreignization is not feasible on all occasions, the translators resorted to domestication here as a supplementary method so as to make their translation faithful as much as possible to the spirit of the original text:

“自古说：‘晚娘的拳头，云里的日头。’……”

“*A stepmother is always cruel...*” (p.126-127)

The connotation of “晚娘的拳头，云里的日头” is about the cruelty of a stepmother. If it were translated into *the fist of a stepmother is like the sun in the clouds* to reproduce the original images, the TL readers would find the comparison wholly impertinent.

沈大脚道：“这个何消说？我从来是‘一点水一个泡’的人，比不得媒人嘴……”

“Of course!” cried Big Foot. “*I always stick strictly to the truth*: I’ve not got the usual match-maker’s mouth...” (p.656-657)

In the Yangs’ translation, the images of the idiom “一点水一个泡” are all discarded, but its implied meaning *stick strictly to the truth* was brought out, so the readers can better appreciate the true sense of this Chinese idiom.

As we have mentioned before, *The Scholars* is a collection of stories about the lives of the intellectuals, and its main characters are of course the scholars, but Wu Jingzi also created a lot of common people such as landlords, provincial officials, merchants, monks, Taoist priests and so on. The range of the characters covers nearly all walks of life. So the Common Sayings used by them in ordinary life can mirror their feelings and thoughts. And the strategies should be chosen properly to introduce the cultural messages in Common Sayings of the SL text.

4.5 Slang (俚语)

Slang, as it is defined in *The New Oxford English Dictionary (2001)*, is the language of a highly colloquial type, considered below the level of standard educated speech, and consisting either of new words or of current words employed in some special sense. “Slang, being the quintessence of colloquial speech, must always be related to convenience rather than to scientific laws, grammatical rules and philosophical ideas. As it originates so it flourishes best, in colloquial speech.” (Partridge, 1954:4) It shows that slang is a language form that has much to do with an attitude, a feeling and an act of common people. Though it is often regarded as informal and not quite respectable

because some of the slang belongs to a certain dialect and is vulgar, it takes a large portion of spoken language.

Slang not only appears in speeches, but also is used in the dialogue of dramas, movies, TV plays and novels, so it is easy to find much slang in *The Scholars*. Both Chinese and English have much slang with the same characteristics, which makes it possible for the translators to introduce the slang of the SL to the TL readers.

Generally, slang can be classified into euphemism (委婉语) and vulgar expression (粗俗语). In the following parts, we will discuss them and their translation separately with examples from *The Scholars*.

4.5.1 Euphemisms

Euphemism is a common and long-standing linguistic and cultural phenomenon in both western countries and China. It is “the substitution of an agreeable or inoffensive word or expression for one that is harsh, indelicate, or otherwise unpleasant; or taboo, or a polite, tactful or less explicit term used to avoid the direct naming of an unpleasant, painful, or frightening reality.”(*Webster's Third New International Dictionary, 1976*) Euphemisms are most elegant because they preserve decency when something unpleasant is mentioned, and they use mild, agreeable or roundabout words or phrases to replace the exact but blunt words which may be painful or offensive.

As referred to before, the doctrines of Ru School and many other feudal moral ideologies were emphasized on feudal social stratum and handed down for more than a thousand years. The reason of this phenomenon lies in, that, in ancient China, these doctrines and ideologies could help the rulers a lot to control people's ideas. In the Han Dynasty, Emperor Wu (汉武帝) honored these doctrines and ideologies greatly and since then people had to be careful with their words, otherwise, they would be despised, punished or even killed. As a result, euphemisms developed and flourished in Chinese feudal society.

Taboo generates euphemisms. In ancient times, people knew little about some natural phenomena, so they became superstitious about supernatural powers or the existence of gods and devils. When people dared not speak out something regarded as taboos, they had to avoid something harsh by using a pleasant or indirect one to imply something that both the speaker and the listener knew. Take death as an example, there are many euphemisms of it in all kinds of languages because death is such a misfortune that nobody can escape.

范进方才说道：“先母见背，遵制丁忧。”

“*My mother has died*,” Fan Jin explained, “and I am in mourning.” (p.106-107)

“先母” is an euphemism to show one’s respect when he talks of his mother who is dead, and “见背” is also an euphemism to refer to the death of one’s elders. Both are used in ancient China and actually they mean *My mother has died*.

“快替我穿了送老的衣服，我立刻就要去了！”

“Dress me quickly in my *funeral* clothes!” he said. “I am *going to my last rest*.” (p540-541)

Here both “老” and “去了” are the euphemisms of “死”, and *go to one’s last rest* is also an euphemism of *die* in English

From the above euphemisms we can see that both Chinese and English have euphemisms for the common natural phenomenon, and the Yangs’ strategy of using English euphemisms to translate Chinese euphemisms can make the English readers know fully this language phenomenon.

Social convention is accepted by most people and they behave according to this convention. So this convention is sure to be reflected in their language, and people like to use euphemisms in order to be polite and not to offend others. In old Chinese, when a person wanted to show his respect to others, he must try to avoid speaking out the other’s name directly, but the westerners don’t have such kind of euphemisms. Then, if this phenomenon is introduced through foreignization, the English readers must be bewildered. So the Yangs avoided translating literally and reproduced its implied meaning instead:

这位三公子，讳俸，字玉亭，是个孝廉；四公子，讳璘，字瑟亭，在监读书。

This two brothers were his third and fourth sons, Lou *Feng* and Lou *Zan*, the one a provincial graduate and the other a student of the Imperial College. (p.212-213)

凤老四道：“三令兄可是讳缜的？”

“Is your brother’s name Hu *Zhen*?” (p.1242-1243)

Here in the above two sentences, the Chinese character “讳” is used to show that the speaker uttered indirect referent and tried to be polite or to flatter others. The Yangs’ translation reproduced the meaning and omitted the cultural connotation of these euphemisms.

So is the strategy in dealing with the following example:

严致和道：“这话也说不尽了；只是家兄如今两脚站开，差人却在我这里吵闹要人……”

“Never mind that,” said Yan. “The fact is that my brother *has gone*, while runners from the yamen have been to my house looking for some one to arrest...” (p.120-121)

“两脚站开” is the replacement of “逃跑” (run away), but the latter is quite direct and harsh, especially referred to his elder brother’s disgraceful act, so Yan spoke about it in a roundabout way.

Morality, another important part of culture, refers to the standards or principles of good behavior of a certain society. Such standards and principles have an impact on the linguistic behavior of the society. According to certain morality, some words are thought to be improper though they are correct in grammar or in meaning. People try to talk or write in a roundabout way about the things that might be against their moral code, and euphemisms would enable people to keep the morality and communicate successfully. For example, in English, “misconduct or intimacy” is the euphemism of adultery and pregnant is often replaced by “in a delicate condition or in a family way”.

……那妇人便笑嘻嘻从窗子里爬了过来，就做了巫山一夕。

...The woman smiled and climbed into his cabin, and they had *a night of love*. (p.1226-1227)

Here “巫山一夕” is an euphemism about love affairs in Chinese, the translators render it into an English euphemism of the sexual intercourse, thus the translation not only makes clear the connotation but also shows that both Chinese and English have euphemisms for some social or private behaviors.

“自古道：船载的金银，填不满烟花债。”

“But don’t you know the proverb? A whole boat of gold and silver won’t be enough for *a courtesan*.” (p.1290-1291)

In old Chinese language, one of the euphemism of the prostitute is “烟花女” or “烟花”，but we shouldn’t translated it into *fireworks* or *smoke and flower* through foreignizing method, because they don’t match fireworks with a prostitute or streetwalker. So the Yangs used the strategy of domestication to show its real meaning in the original text.

4.5.2 Vulgar Expressions

Both in Chinese and in English, there exists the phenomenon that when people are in a disagreeable condition or when they are angry and uncomfortable, they will show their anger, hatred, and despite etc. by using cursing, swearing or insulting words. This kind of language often makes use of heaven, hell, god, devil and other words like disease, death, kill and ghost. Some vulgar expressions often refer to the sex organs or animals like “狗攢的奴才” (p.234) and “一班狗才” (p.474), persons and deeds that cause people’s imagination of disease or dislike such as “瞎眼的死囚” (p.234), “倒运鬼” (p.340), “受瘟罪” (p.340) and “瘟奴” (p.1294); some refer to the way of one’s death, “死砍头短命的” (p.84) is an example.

In *The Scholars*, Wu Jingzi made use of some vulgar expressions to describe the characters’ words and deeds. Though some vulgar expressions still keep their original meanings, owing to their frequent use, most of them have lost their literal meanings. Therefore, these idioms mustn’t be explained or translated from their individual meanings and the translator should readjust them according to the difference between the two languages and cultures, and take full consideration of the TL readers’ acceptability.

The following vulgar expressions are replaced with the English vulgar counterparts and from them the TL readers can guess the attitudes and characteristics of those who uttered such expressions:

牛玉圃道：“放你的狗屁！你弄的好乾坤哩！”

“Curse you!” bellowed Niu Yu-pu. “You played a dirty trick on me!” (p.576-577)

丈人道：“放屁！你是该人的钱，怎是我用你的？”

“You are the one in debt,” he fumed. “How can you accuse me of spending your money?” (p.1292-1293)

In the above two examples, there exist the same vulgar expression “放屁”, if they are translated into “break wind” or “fart”, or “pass the wind”, the English readers must be confused about why the speakers sent such orders by using imperative sentences, so domestication is used in place of foreignization in such circumstances.

和尚听了，屁滚尿流，慌忙烧茶、下面。

The moment the monk heard this, he was beside himself with excitement and hustled officiously off to make tea and prepare noodles for Butcher Hu. (p.90-91)

饭店里见是潘三爷，屁滚尿流，鸭和肉都拣上好的极肥的切来，海参杂脍加味用作料。

Seeing that it was Mr. Pan, the restaurant people *nearly fell over back wards* trying to please him, choosing their choicest and fattest pork and duck for him and cooking the sea slugs to turn. (p.474-475)

今番见了，*屁滚尿流*，凭着官叫他说甚么就是甚么，那里还敢顶一句。

So, *frightened out of his wits*, he said whatever the magistrate wanted to hear, not daring to contradict him. (p.1052-1053)

The same vulgar expression “*屁滚尿流*” in the above three sentences are used three times to show us the attitudes of different characters. The first one is rendered into *he was beside himself with excitement* because the monk thought Butcher Hu and Fan Jin had become rich and famous, and he felt flattered to serve them. The second one shows that the restaurant people wanted to flatter Mr. Pan. While the third described how the salt merchant's clerk was afraid of the magistrate. From these expressions we can also find that the writer either despised or hated them. According to different connotations of the same idiom in different context, the Yangs don't keep the vulgar images but reproduce the connotations, thus their translation is both neat and faithful.

牛玉圃只得带着长随在丑坝寻一个饭店住下，口口声声只念着：“万雪斋这狗头，如此可恶！”

Niu Yu-pu had to take his servants to a tavern at Choupa, where he kept growling: “*You dirty swine, Wan Xue-zhai!*” (p.576-577)

Here, if the cursing phrase “狗头” is rendered into *the dog's head*, the TL readers will not know what Niu Yu-pu was talking about. In English dog is often thought highly of while swine is often used as a cursing word, so the Yangs turned it into *You dirty swine* to get the same effect.

The same strategy is used in translating the vulgar expressions in the following examples:

“……像你这样尖嘴猴腮，也该撒泡尿自己照照！不三不四，就想吃天鹅屁！……”

“... But your mouth sticks out and you've a chin like an ape's. *You should piss on the ground and look at your face in the puddle! You look like a monkey, yet you want to become an official...*” (p. 70-71)

船上的那些人道：“狗彘的奴才！你睁开驴眼看看灯笼上的字！船是那家的船！” (p. 234-235)

“*Fool!*” shouted the bullies. “Use your *silly eyes* to look at the names of the lanterns.

See whose boat this is?"

丈人骂道：“该死的畜生！我女儿退了做什么事哩？”

“Curse you! Why should I take my daughter back?” (p.1294-1295)

“……银子又用的精光，还剩了一屁股两肋巴的债，不如卷卷行李，往福建去罢。”

“... I've finished my silver and *piled up all these debts*. I'd better go to Fukien.” (p.1302-1303)

4.6 Chinese Two-part Sayings (歇后语)

Chinese Two-part Saying, a unique kind of idioms, also called Enigmatic Folk Simile, is “a sentence composed of two parts with the first part as a riddle and the second as the answer to it. Usually with the first part stated and the second unstated, the connotation lies in the second part.”(《现代汉语词典》,1984) That is to say, a Chinese Two-part Saying has a particular structure of a riddle, the first part often appears as a vivid simile and concrete analogy, while the second part is the explanation of the first part. When only the first part is used, it will be quite difficult to those who know little about that, thus it makes readers rack their brains to catch what the real meaning or the connotation of this expression is.

Chinese Two-part Saying is the unique form that can be found in few other languages and most Chinese Two-part Sayings are full of the ethnic color of Chinese, including ancient Chinese people, places, events; some contain the customs or religious beliefs as well. Compared with other types of idioms, they are neither elegant nor explicit. Still, Chinese Two-part Sayings are most popular among people for their peculiar forms and strong local flavor, and they are widely used in an oral context. People of all social strata like to use them in their conversations or articles. Chinese Two-part Sayings are humorous and witty, and the use of them in reading materials can make a striking impression on the readers.

Generally, there are two forms of expression in Chinese Two-part Sayings in terms of figures of speech: one is using allegory and the other is using puns.

4.6.1 Figurative Two-part Allegorical Sayings

Most of the Chinese Two-part Sayings use allegory, and in such two-part sayings, the allegory part usually has a vivid image while the second part carries the figurative meaning which can be inferred from the allegory. Usually in this kind of Chinese Two-part Sayings, the original images play an important role in the connotation of the

whole idiom or even in the whole sentence and paragraph, and the omission of them may cause confusion to the TL readers. So the translator should keep the original cultural images and show the connotation at the same time in order to be faithful to the original and to please the TL readers.

周进听了这话，自己想：“‘瘫子掉进井里，捞起也是坐。’有甚亏负我？”

“Even if a paralytic falls into a well, he can be no worse off than before,” thought Zhou Jin. *“It can’t hurt me to go.”* (p.54-55)

“我说二三百两，你就说二三十两，‘戴着斗笠亲嘴，差着一帽子！’怪不得人说你们‘诗云子曰’的人难讲话！”

“When I say two or three hundred taels, you say twenty or thirty! It’s like kissing in straw helmets--the lips are far apart!” (p.352-353)

卖人参的人听了，“哑叭梦见妈，说不出的苦！”急得暴跳如雷。

When the ginseng-seller heard this, he was like a dumb man dreaming of his mother – he couldn’t voice his distress. He stamped frantically in anger. (p.1304-1305)

The two parts of the above idioms are connected intrinsically in meaning, so foreignization can best transmit the denotation and connotation to the TL readers without losing its original images and cultural messages.

However, when it is too hard to keep both the image and the figurative meaning in the TL, or when the image and the metaphorical meaning are reproduced or made clear, either of the two parts can be crossed out.

潘三道：“你又甚么事捣鬼话？同你共事，你是‘马蹄刀瓢里切菜，滴水也不漏’，总不肯放出钱来。”

“What are you up to now?” demanded Pan. *“I’ve never worked with any one so close-fisted. You can’t bear parting with a cent!”* (p.482-483)

“……你一个尊年人，不想做些好事，只要‘在光水头上钻眼——骗人’！”

“... An old man like you should be thinking of doing good deeds, instead of cheating people all the time.” (p.590-591)

Also there is a case in which the images are only familiar to Chinese people, or the reproduction or explanation of them may be too long to arouse readers’ interests, so the translator has to preserve the metaphorical meanings with the allegorical part omitted or replaced with a synonymous idiom of the TL.

严贡生发怒道：“……你这奴才！‘猪八戒吃人参果，全不知滋味’！……方才这几片，不要说值几十两银子，‘半夜里不见了枪头子，攘到贼肚子里去了’；……”

“...You had no business touching it, you scoundrel! ... Nearly a hundred tael's worth of medicine has disappeared down your throat...” (p.154-155)

“……怪不得人说你们‘诗云子曰’的人难讲话！这样看来，你好像‘老鼠尾巴上害疔子，出脓也不多！’……”

“... No wonder they say you bookworms are hard to deal with: one might just as well try to *squeeze water out of a stone*...” (p.352-353)

4.6.2 Pun-featured Two-part Sayings

Chinese Two-part Sayings of this kind use puns in the second part and they have literal meaning and metaphorical meaning at the same time. Usually the second part is a homophonic pun, which has the same or similar pronunciation but different characters. “外甥打灯笼——找舅(照旧)” is an example, which means that “things will remain what they were before”. Here, “舅” and “旧” have the same pronunciation but neither the characters nor the meanings are the same, so it is impossible to translate them through foreignization. As a result, the Yangs used the strategy of domestication in rendering them into English.

瞎子听了半天，听他两人说的都是“堂屋里挂草荐，不是话”，也就不扯劝，慢慢的摸着回去了。

After hearing all the *nonsense* they were talking, the blind man gave up trying to reason with them and groped his way back to his room. (p.1294-1295)

Due to the special features of puns, the limits of the TL culture and the TL itself, it is most difficult for the translator to retain the original images, the unique forms and their connotations all at the same time while they are putting these Two-part Sayings into English. And the best way out for the translation of them lies in making appropriate adaptation in some concrete conditions. It needs invention and translators' creativity. In fact, translation is an art as well as a science. What used to be considered untranslatable now turn out to be translatable. Many translation workers, both theorists and master translators, have painstaking research into the translation of puns. They gradually have achieved some preliminary results and their work has shed some light on this problem. And the author of this thesis is fully convinced that, sooner or later, the hard nut of pun translation is sure to be cracked.

CHAPTER V

PITFALLS OF IDIOM TRANSLATION IN *THE SCHOLARS*

From the study of the translation of these idioms in *The Scholars*, we can see that the Yangs had done an excellent job in idiom translation. Their skillful use of the translation strategies makes the English version no less attractive than the original. Their translation strategy of “foreignization first, domestication second” is the best example to prove that translators should try their best to keep as much as possible the accuracy of the content and the appropriateness of the language style. In this respect, idiom translation provides us a research material on how to successfully transmit the cultural message contained in the source text.

However, just as the Chinese idiom goes, “金无足赤，人无完人”-- “(Just as)gold cannot be pure, (so) people cannot be perfect”; or the English idiom goes, “To err is human”. Nothing is perfect in the world, neither is the Yangs’ translation. For some reason, it’s safe to say there exist some pitfalls in *The Scholars*. In this chapter, the author will make a tentative study of the translation pitfalls in dealing with some culture-loaded idioms and classify them into three groups, not for criticism, but for speculation and discussion:

5.1 Over-foreignization

Though we have stressed before that foreignization is the best way to keep up the features carried by idioms, this strategy shouldn’t lead the translator to do some word-for-word translation or over-foreignization of the original idioms. The following examples can be improved:

匡超人听了这些话，慌忙作揖，磕下头去，说道：“晚生真乃‘有眼不识泰山’！”

When Kuang Chao-ren heard this, he made a haste to bow. “*Although I have eyes,*” he exclaimed, “*I have failed to see Mount Tai!*” (p.388-389)

Many English readers know nothing about the famous Chinese mountain “泰山”, nor are they familiar with such expressions as “有眼不识泰山”. So they don’t know what the connotation of this idiom is and why Kuang Chao-ren uttered such a statement.

To avoid confusions of the TL readers about this idiom, the author thinks it might be better if a note is added like: *Mount Tai is one of the great mountains in Shandong*

Province and this idiom is often used to express one's ignorance rather than man's anatomical eyesight.

“……趁舍妹眼见，你两口子同拜天地祖宗，立为正室，谁人再敢放屁！”

“...While our sister's eyes can still see, you and Concubine Zhao shall *worship heaven and earth and the ancestors* together, showing that she is your lawful wife. Then your relatives will have to hold their tongues.” (p.130-131)

“拜天地祖宗” is a traditional Chinese wedding ceremony, which is not the same as the westerners', and their knowledge about the images of this idiom is also quite different from ours. To introduce this ceremony, the author suggests it be translated through domestication into *have a wedding ceremony* or through foreignization with a note like *it is one of the Chinese traditional wedding ceremonies*.

Usually, an idiom contains a connotation besides its literal meaning and image(s). When the translator fails to know this, his translation will not achieve the expected effect. For example, the English readers will be plunged in confusion when they read the above sentence of worshiping.

5.2 Over-domestication

Domestication is widely used in translation when the translator takes into consideration the TL readers' reaction and ability of understanding. But sometimes we shouldn't exchange one idiom for another indiscriminately in the TL, because the idiom may have some kind of distinctively national or local flavor, or the idiom may have a special biographical or geographical name. Such idioms may be associated with some specific situations of a nation, so we must take full account of the cultural differences and national flavors, and try not to approve a forced assimilation of figurative idioms. Otherwise our translation will be over-domesticated, images of the original text will be lost and incorrect cultural associations may be aroused.

众人一齐道：“‘君子成人之美。’”

The others responded heartily: “*A friend in need is a friend indeed!*” (p.58-59)

Here, the idiom “君子成人之美” is just replaced by a similar English saying: “A friend in need is a friend indeed”. Though the English readers can get the connotation of it, they cannot appreciate the Chinese images. Firstly, we know that the others didn't

regard Zhou Jin as their friend, because friends should be equal, but the others thought they were much superior to Zhou Jin for their higher social stratum and richer materials. And they just wanted to show pity on Zhou Jin. Secondly, they thought they were noble men, and should help Zhou Jin out of miser so as to show their higher morality. But all these are lost in the Yangs' translation. The author thinks it will be better if it is turned into *gentlemen are always ready to help others attain their goals*.

5.3 Pitfalls Caused by Negligence and Misunderstanding

Mistakes are unavoidable. Even "Homer sometimes nods", Mr. and Mrs. Yang are human beings and they are no exception. Due to their negligence or misunderstanding, some cultural messages were not transferred to the TL. For example, "纸钱" (p.678, p1032) is turned into "paper money" or "paper coins" which means "money consists of small sheets of paper, not coins". (*Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 1997*) It should be translated through domestication into "ghost money" or "money for spirits".

Another example is the misunderstanding of "祖父":

".....依孩儿的意思，总是白挣的功名好，靠着祖父，只算做不成器！"

"... I believe in a man making his own way. Only a good-for-nothing would be let his grandfather support him." (p.276-277)"

"祖父" is "one's ancestor including or excluding father" in many Chinese dialects and in *The Scholars* it does not refer to "grandfather" in a narrow sense.

Such pitfalls do affect the correct understanding of the translation, but on the whole, they are few and far between.

CONCLUSION

As discussed in the above chapters, translation is the conversion not only between two languages, but also between two cultures. Because of natural and social factors, the culture of a nation is unique and has its distinctive national characteristics. As a result, the language of a nation, which is a part of culture, inevitably, has some features that are different from any other's. Idioms, as the crystal and diamond of a language, show their cultural specialty in any kind of language works.

Translation is not only a bilingual activity, but also a bicultural behavior. So, firstly, the translator should have linguistic competence in the SL and the TL, and then he should be a master of the two cultures. When a translator is doing Chinese-English translation about the idioms, he must not only realize what Chinese idioms are like, but also bear in mind what special cultural information these idioms contain. He must be an expert at Chinese idioms and have a good command of English. Only when he has the solid foundation of both SL and TL, can the translator have the potential to be an eligible translator. Secondly, "to be a fully competent translator, one also needs to be bicultural in order to 'read between lines'," (Nida, 2001:99) because "biculturalism is even more important than bilingualism." (ibid: 82) Idiom is regarded as the special form of language, hence a carrier of culture. So the translator of idioms shouldn't, during the translation process, neglect the cultural information in the idioms and he should have the ability to identify all the cultural similarities and differences between the two languages. Only when the translator has become a master of both languages and cultures can he be competent for idiom translation and avoid cultural errors.

In *The Scholars*, abundant ideas are expressed figuratively and many images in idioms are of typical Chinese cultural specialty. In translating these idioms, the Yangs used the two strategies of translation—foreignization and domestication properly. That is, foreignization takes the dominant position and domestication subordinates. The translation of *The Scholars* shows the Yangs' inclination to the strategy of foreignization in cultural translation, because they aimed at disseminating Chinese culture to the outside world.

Today, with the globalization in every aspect of the world, cultural communication among countries is becoming more and more frequent. And the native culture of every nation treats foreign cultures with a more respectful and acceptable attitude. So, on the one hand, translators should be in cultural consciousness and try their best to transmit and absorb foreign culture; on the other hand, he should develop his native language and culture. It's doubtless that the translation strategy weighs a lot in the cross-cultural

communication. The opening and compatible quality of culture is the precondition of foreignization. In the process of the development of culture, foreignization is always irresistible, reasonable and shares the same fate with language and culture. It can help the understanding of the original content, styles of writing and cultural connotation, help the TL to absorb exotic expressions, and enrich its own culture; while domestication is an indispensable and supplementary strategy to some cultural translation. If the translator can make use of them properly, that is, to abide by the principle of "Foreignization first, domestication second", the communication and understanding of culture between different nations will be enhanced.

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