浅析林语堂翻译三标准
-以《浮生六记》林语堂英译本为例

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摘要：林语堂提出的翻译三标准曾一度被认为是严复翻译三原则的翻版而埋没，本文将结合《浮生六记》
林语堂英译本来找出林语堂三标准的独到之处，它对于翻译理论的贡献。

关键词：林语堂；《浮生六记》；翻译三标准；翻译理论

1. Introduction

In the third translation climax, from the Opium War through the May Fourth Movement, a large number of scholars got down to introducing western advanced culture, translating Chinese literature to the outside world and putting forward their own translation theory. Among various translation theory, Yan Fu’s faithfulness, expressiveness and elegance and Lu Xun’s literal translation and faithfulness and expressiveness were quite popular. Then after that, Fu Lei’s spiritual conformity, Qian Zhongshu’s sublimed adaptation also gained popularity. However, Lin Yutang’s translation theory was eclipsed by his contemporaries. When it comes to Lin Yutang’s three translation criteria, many people more often than not considered it to be equal to Yan Fu’s faithfulness, expressiveness and elegance. Until the end of 1980s, Lin Yutang’s special outlook on life, humor and aesthetic quality were little studied. In the 1990s, many people centered on his literary works, literary style, outlook on aesthetic quality. However, study on his translation at that time was restricted to the introduction of his translation theory and micro study of several translated works. Generally speaking, there are four types of study according to the subject of study, that is, study of his translation theory, translation strategies used in some works, sentence as translation unit and comparison study. Nevertheless, given his more than 50 translations and translation theory of great significance, there are still more aspects of his translation waiting to be probed into.

Lin Yutang, a bilingual writer, famous translator and inventor of the twentieth century, buried himself in spreading Chinese culture to the outside world. He was born into a family of a pastor and received western education since childhood and got his master and doctoral degree respectively in Harvard University and the University of Leipzig and went to Peking University to make up for Chinese culture. He translated more than 50 works in Classical Chinese into English, including Six Chapters of a Floating Life, The Wisdom of Confucius, The wisdom of Laotse and The Importance of Understanding. He employed perspicuous and poetic language in translation and advanced his translation theory, which was mainly discussed in two articles, On Translation and On Poetry Translation. What’s more, he wrote several English novels about the Chinese people, such as Between Tears and Laughter, a Leaf in the Storm and Moment in Peking. On top of novels, he also dissected Chinese problems and revealed Chinese people’s characteristics and outlook on life and world through non-fictions, such as My Country and My People and The Importance of Life. He also founded several magazines to make comments on current affairs, the most famous among which is Analects, which was noted for its humor and satire. In addition to literary works, he devoted himself to philology and invention. The greatest contribution of Lin Yutang to the spread of the Chinese language is the invention of first Chinese typewriter into which he had sunk almost all of his savings.

In the present thesis, the author will first summarize studies focusing on Lin Yutang’s translation theory, and point out the limitation of current research. Then, the author will give a sketch of Lin’s three translation standards and probe into its essence distinguished from that of Yan Fu. Next, based on the case study of Six Chapters of a Floating Life, the author attempts to display the essence of the three criteria to prove that Lin’s criteria is groundbreaking in many aspects and deserve scrupulous and systematic studying.

2. Literature Review
According to the number of articles published in China’s Core Journals, Studies concerning Lin Yutang could be categorized into three periods, the 1980s, the starting period, the 1990s, the growth period, and the 2000s, the mature periods. In the first period, 22 articles were published on Core Journals, and could centered around four major themes, Lin Yutang and culture, Lin’s humor, his lifetime and Lin Yutang and Lu Xun, ranked in the order of the frequency of being researched. Clearly, in this period there were few articles concerning his translation theory, except one about his outlook on aesthetic beauty. During the second period, 70 articles were issued. Most still centered around his cultural, religious and aesthetic thoughts. Only one article, One Translation Theory Should not Be Neglected[2] by Chen Rongdong, was about Lin’s translation theory. Chen Rongdong probed into Lin Yutang’s On Translation, set great store by Lin Yutang’s perspicacious remarks on the art of translation and pointed out that Lin Yutang’s three translation criteria is the development of Yan Fu’s three translation criteria, instead of being equal to the latter, which is the opposite of the mainstream thoughts. What’s more, there were some articles mentioning Lin’s translation theory indirectly. Xu Yuanchong concluded that Lin Yutang’s five beauties could be summarized as three in an article - 《译学要敢为天下先》. And in Shouyi Fan’s Highlights of Translation Studies in China Since the Mid-Nineteenth Century[3], he pointed out that Lin Yutang adopted domestication as translation strategy and equated Lin’s three translation criteria with that of Yan Fu. In the third period, studies on Lin Yutang prospered for subjects of studies became more colorful and profound and articles on Lin Yutang surged. Articles centering around Lin Yutang totaled 115. Besides, more people set great store by Lin Yutang’s translations and his theory. In this period, studies from this aspects boomed in terms of quality and quantity. They can be divided into two major types of studies on Lin Yutang’s translation theory according to the research methods.

Pure theoretical studies: Some studies focus on the whole translation theory of Lin Yutang, such as Zhou Shibao’s Lin Yutang’s Translation Theory[4], in which he compared translation theories of many scholars to display the essence of Lin Yutang’s translation theory and came to a conclusion that Lin Yutang’s theory, founded on modern linguistics and psychology, injected new vigor and life into the development of translation theory. Others studied a certain aspect of translation criteria. For example, Lu Yang’s Lin Yutang and the Aesthetics of Translation[5] went to the great depths of Lin Yutang’s aestheticism from the poetic perspective.

On both theory and translated works: Some people studied Lin’s translation theory accompanied by the study of certain Lin’s translated works. Shi Qiong has discussed Lin Yutang’s translation criteria and summed up all translation strategies adopted in Moment in Peking[6]. He concluded that foreignization is the main translation strategy of this translated work with explanatory translation as the auxiliary strategy. Wu Huijian based his study on My Country and My People and Lin Yutang’s translation criteria and concluded that translation conditions determine the choice of translation strategy and criteria[7].

To sum up, Lin Yutang’s translation theory are given increasingly more attention recently and studies on it are quite abundant. However, there are still vacuums waiting to be filled, such as the micro study of his less-studied translated works and of translation theory from the perspective of other disciplines.

2. Lin Yutang’s Translation Theory
As early as in 1924, Lin Yutang published an article, An Urgent Proposal to Unify Translated Terms, on a morning post. Since then, he wrote more than 10 articles on translation. The most noted one is On Translation, a preface to a book on translation, in which Lin Yutang systematically expatiated on his translation theory. His main points are as follows.

To kick it off, translators must realize that translating is an art. The art of translation requires translators first to have a thorough understanding of the source texts, then to be proficient in target language, and last to have enough translation training and hold a correct view of translation criteria and theory.

Secondly, he brought forward three standards of translation, faithfulness, smoothness and aesthetic quality, respectively corresponding to loyalty, expressiveness and elegance put forward by Yan Fu. Lin’s three standards were further summarized as three matters, the matter of translators’ understanding of the source text, the matter of translators’ Chinese proficiency and the matter of translating literature in an artistic way. Hence, translators should be responsible for original works, target readers and art.

Finally, translation is an activity concerning translators’ psychology and language. As Liu Jingzhi, an eminent translator, said, Lin Yutang developed Yan Fu’s translation theory by making translation a mind activity.

The following part will go into the depths of his three translation standards, faithfulness, smoothness and aesthetic quality.

(1) Faithfulness

Faithfulness criterion is concerned with how to make target texts loyal to source texts and original writers. According to Lin Yutang, four points about faithfulness need attention. First, faithfulness requires translators to translate sentence by sentence not word by word. In his opinion, there were four degrees of faithfulness, namely, dead translation, literal translation, sense translation, imprudent translation. Both imprudent translation and dead translation should be avoided for both of them distorted the meaning of source texts. He also objected to considering sense translation and literal translation as two strategies because the borders between imprudent translation and sense translation, dead translation and literal translation were unclear. He categorized translation processes into two types, that is, word-for-word translation and sentence-for-sentence translation. Moreover, he proposed sentence-for-sentence translation and opposed word-for-word translation. The former translation strategy requires translators to have a thorough understanding of source texts, and then convey the meaning of sentences in accordance with grammar of the target language. The latter requires translators to translate each word and assemble these translated words into a sentence. He pointed out that word-for-word translation is incorrect because the meaning of every single word varies with circumstances. Translators should responsible for the meaning of whole sentences rather than that of single word.

Second, translators should not only endeavor to transmit the meaning of source texts, but also try to convey its spirit or feeling tone. Feeling tones refer to implicature, such as, authors’ emotions and opinions toward certain things.

Third, Lin Yutang pointed out that absolute faithfulness is only an ideal. For one thing, translators could only reproduce some aspects of the beauty of source texts because languages’ beauty lie in sound, meaning, spirit, style and genre. It is impossible to transmit all those beauties in translation.

Fourth, Lin Yutang argued that translations should be fluent and natural. As to English-to-Chinese translation, translations should conform to Chinese grammar and Chinese usage. Conversely, they should agree with English grammar and usage. This criterion is also
regarded by Lin Yutang as the second important criterion, which stresses that fluency is essential to achieve faithfulness.

(2) Smoothness

As to smoothness, Lin Yutang put emphasis on three points. Firstly, he compared translation to writing. Conceiving ideas before putting them down is a common process of writing. In order to make translations as smooth as source texts, translators should have a general concept of source texts before rendering them into target languages. Secondly, he advocated sentence-for-sentence translation, not word-for-word translation. As is discussed above, the meaning of every single word varies from texts to texts. Therefore, it is impossible to find corresponding words in target languages which is applicable to all contexts. Thirdly, translated works must be as natural as original works. It means that translators must take target languages’ grammar, lexicon and culture into consideration. Otherwise, translated works would be unintelligible to TRs.

This criterion indicates that good translation must be recognized by target readers, corresponding to translators’ responsibility for target readers. To be fluent, translators have to translate according to the grammar of target languages and follow the way of thinking and expression of target readers, which agrees with sense translation and domestication.

(3) The Aesthetic Quality

Lin Yutang mentioned that aesthetic quality of translations has long been a subject of study in both West and East. Croce had commented that works with high artistic value are not translatable. Translators could produce them rather than reproduce them. As the peak of literary works, poems are the last thing that could be translated for literary works are the perfect combination of thinking and languages. The lack of one of them could reduce the charm of source texts.

In translating literary works, translators should give equal importance to their form and content. He summarized five beauties of languages, beauty in sound, sense, spirit, style and genre, which can not be embodied all at once.

Moreover, he summarized that there were two layers of style, that is, the outer form and the inner form. The outer form referred to the sound and forms, such as figures of speech, rhythm, and length of sentences. The inner form consisted of authors’ emotions and attitudes.

Therefore, to make translations as appealing as source texts, translators should fully appreciate the beauty of the source texts, carefully explore original writers’ feelings, and then give full scope to his creativity.

3 Case Study

3.1 Faithfulness

As is mentioned in the prior chapter, there are four points of faithfulness needing attention, that is, sentence-for-sentence translation, conveying feeling tones, non-absolute faithfulness and being fluent. In the following part, the author will probe into faithfulness through several examples.

3.1.1 Sentence-for-Sentence Translation

(1) Meanings of the Same Phrases Differ

“晦明风雨，可以远眺”
“From it one could get a beautiful view of the distance in rain or shine.” (ibid., 109)
“风雨晦明，恍同太古”
“it was a life of simple struggle with the elements of nature, dreary and powerful and wild, like that of primeval times” (ibid., 307)

Although both of the two sentences have the same phrase， 風雨晦明， meaning all weather
conditions, day or night, rain or shine, their translation is quite different. The first sentence
highlights the majesty of the tower and means that be it rain or shine, the tower could command a
fine view of the distance. The second sentence describes the simple and primeval lifestyle of
farmers, who are enthusiastic, honest and righteous. Thus, the phrase here is not used to mean
normal weather conditions but those severe natural conditions that farmers have to battle with as
did in the primeval times.
(2) Word-for-Word Translation Disconnects Syntax Meanings

“惜乎轮蹄征逐，处处随人；山水怡情，云烟过眼，不过领略其大概，不能探僻寻幽也。”

“Unfortunately, I was not free to wander where I liked, inasmuch as I was always attached to
some office, and could therefore only hastily enjoy such natural scenery as came my way,
getting at most a general impression of things without the opportunity to explore the more
unfrequent and out-of-the-way spots.” (ibid., 205)

The first source sentence means that Shen Fu was compelled to follow other people anywhere
they went. In Lin’s translation, he translated the original affirmative sentence into a negative one.
In this way, Shen Fu’s reluctance to follow others is stressed. Besides, the reason that he was
attached to other people was put behind the result, according to western way of expression. And
the second sentence is not the simple combination of each word and sequence of words was
changed. Lin Yutang’s translation is based on the whole sentence, and thus is more logic and easy
to understand.
3.1.2 Adding Feeling Tones
(1) “若必考其文法，是贵明于垢鉴矣”

“I hope the reader will be kind enough not to scrutinize my grammar, which would be like
looking for brilliance in a tarnished mirror.” (ibid., 003)

This original Chinese sentence means that his work resembled the dirty mirror in that it must
have been full of mistakes of grammar, which shows his humility. In order to express Shen’s
humility, Lin added, “I hope the reader will be kind enough” “kind enough” often is used to
express courtesy. Had it been translated literally, the sentence would be like “if readers should
scrutinize my grammar, it would be like looking for brilliance in a tarnished mirror.” Compared
with Lin’s version, the literal-translated version seems to criticize readers and humble tone is
largely reduced.
(2) “上下光洁，纤尘不染，知为好静之”

“I was struck by the extreme neatness and cleanliness of the place, and realized that its
owner must be a person who loved quiet and solitude.”(ibid., 285)

At that time, Shen Fu came to a place called the Hall of Weitou for the first time. The
extremely clean room left him a deep impression, so he put down his line. However, Shen Fu
didn’t explicitly express his surprise by words. By adding the word “struck”, Lin Yutang
underlined Shen’s excitement .
3.2 Smoothness

As to smoothness, Lin Yutang pointed out translation should be based on sentence unit, and
should be intelligible to TRs by complying with their manners of expression and thinking patterns.
3.2.1 Supplementing Implicit Sentences
(1) “清风两袖，眷属不能偕行”(ibid., 201)

“as he was an upright official, having made no money from his people and therefore
unable to pay the expenses to bring his family there”.

The episode happened when his friend, Chot’ang, was promoted as inspector. If we had not
read later plots, even we Chinese readers would be confused at why he was an upright official and his family could not go along with him. In order to make it clear, Lin Yutang added the reason inferred from later plots.

(2) “真异姓骨肉也” (ibid., 197)

“Youshan was, indeed, better to me than my own kin.”

Before analyzing this translated sentence, let’s have an overview of Shen Fu’s experience at that time. After the bereavement of his wife, he lost his father for ever, which was a heavy blow to him. However, disaster never comes along. He was misunderstood by his mother as an unfilial son and was forced to leave his home empty-handed. When he was disheartened and determined to become a monk, it was Yishan who put him up, offer him jobs and helped him out of difficulties. Compared his own kin’s aloofness, Yishan was a trustworthy and sincere friend. On the surface, he expressed his gratitude towards Yishan. It is not difficult to imagine that Shen Fu must have compared in the depth of his heart his friend’s cordiality with his own kin’s indifference to his sufferings. Thus, the comparison added in the translated version is true to the source text and conveys the feeling tone of the source text.

3.2.2 Translation of Culture-Bound Words

(1) Adaptive Translation of Similar Cultural Information

Adaptive translation refers to substitute information in source texts with that familiar to target readers. The information during this process do not be dropped or added.

“鬼节” “All Soul’s day” (ibid., 029)

The Chinese Deceased’s Day falls on the fifteenth of the seventh month while western All Soul’s day falls on 2nd November which is a Christian Festival in honor of the dead. Thus, the Chinese Deceased’s Day is different from Christian All Soul’s day. The reason why Lin Yutang adapted the Chinese festival to All Soul’s day is that he intended to convey the pragmatic meaning of “鬼节” through adaptive translation so as to make it accessible to western readers.

“明珠暗投”

“but this was like casting pearls before swine” (ibid., 095)

As a lover of pot plants, Shen Fu cherished those artistically trained trees. When some merchant was given rare pot trees, he pitied those rare pot plants that fell into the hands of a person who did not know how to appreciate them. Consequently, he compared rare potted trees to precious pearls thrown to darkness. Lin Yutang adapted it to an English idiom with the same pragmatic meaning as the Chinese four-character phrase.

“与其商柴计米而寻欢，不如一劳而永逸。”

“It’s better to make some money once for all than to live from hand to mouth like this.”

The phrase, “商柴计米”, refers to an impoverished condition in which people have to worry about how to find firewood and rice to survive. Therefore, Lin Yutang substituted an English idiom, “live from hand to mouth” for it. The phrase, “一劳永逸”, derived from a line of Ban Gu in the Han dynasty, “可谓一劳而久逸，暂费而永宁也”, means getting something done once for all. There is an idiom with the same meaning, that is, to put things right once and for all. Lin Yutang employs adaptive translation to make TT more easy to understand by TRs.

(2) Sense Translation of Idioms Peculiar to Chinese Culture

During tens of thousands of years of human development, people in different geographical and social environment created their own distinctive culture. Chinese people invented large quantities of idioms clearly connected with their social activities. So did westerners. When it comes to such
idioms, people diverge as to how to strike a balance between accessibility and culture spreading. To ensure smooth communication, Lin Yutang chose sense translation.

The phrase, “fairs on earth”, is derived from a line, “不食人间烟火”literally means that a person don’t eat cooked food, and connotes that a person has uncommon qualities. It is sometimes used to describe a girl who has surpassing beauty and despises worldly things, and sometimes used to criticize a person who professes to be above worldly consideration. Shen Fu intends to emphasize the great time they have at the Xiaoshuanglou by comparing themselves with fairies in heaven. Lin Yutang thus adopted sense translation to convey the happiness of the couple.

The phrase, “冯妇”, is an allusion to a story that long long ago, there was a courageous man by the name of fengfu (冯妇) who helped villagers to catch a tiger after he had decided to giving up catching tigers. Later, this name became an idiom to describe a person who returns to his old profession. Shen Fu thus compares himself to fengfu in that he quit doing wine business after a failure and again became a clerk in government. For easy understanding, Lin Yutang transmitted the meaning of deep layer and discarded the comparison.

3) Add Explanation to Proper Nouns

“入庙常开庙门” (ibid., 195)

“Entering it and passing through the Hall of Weitou the Swift-Footed Buddha [defender of Buddhism against devils]”

Since “Weitou”, a Buddha, is unfamiliar to foreigners and some contemporary Chinese who doesn’t adhere to Buddhism, Lin Yutang gave the Buddha’s secular name, added his feature, swift-footed, and a note explaining his function.

“临门有关圣提刀立像” (ibid., 285)

“At the door, there was a most imposing standing figure, representing General Kuan Yu, the Chinese God of War and Loyalty, holding a huge knife in his hand.”

When Shen Fu put up in a Buddhist temple, there was a statue of Guan Yu which is a household name in China. Such a significant person in history should be introduced to westerners so as to spread Chinese culture. Thus, Lin Yutang gave a brief introduction of Guan Yu through an appositive.

3.2.3 Trans-edit of Parallel Sentences

“时有杨补凡名昌绪，善写人物写真。袁少迁名沛，工山水；王星澜名岩，工花卉翎毛”

“At this time, there were a group of friends, like Yang Pufan, also called Changsu, who specialized in portrait sketches; Yuan Shaoyu, also called Pai, who specialized in painting landscape; and Wang Hsing-lan, also called Yen, good at painting flowers and birds.” (ibid., )

Shen Fu was here introducing the people who went to Xiaoshuanglou for fun. He enumerated several friends who all were skilled at painting. The original sentence is made up of three separate sentences which are combined together through semicolon. If Lin Yutang translated them word by word, the English sentences would be too loose in both structure and unclear in meaning. Before translating, Lin Yutang gave a general introduction of those people by adding “there were a group of friends”. And those sentences were rendered into parallel phrases. In this way, target readers would be clear as to who these persons are and the translated sentence became neater and clearer.

3.2.4 Explanatory Translation of Interjections
Interjections often appear in dialogues to express an strong or sudden feeling, such as alas! Ouch! Heavens! Dear me! As to translation of interjections, Lin Yutang explained them so as to let target readers have a better understanding of them.

“噫！是虽味美而克心血……” (ibid., 215)

“You’d better look out,” said my tutor. “bamboo-shoots have an action on the heart-beat, although they are so delicious”

At that time, Shen Fu accompanied his tutor to his tutor’s ancestral grave and they were entertained with soups of bamboo-shoots. Shen Fu drank two bowls, so his tutor exclaimed “噫” in an attempt to warn him of risks of drinking too much. Lin Yutang didn’t replace it with a corresponding interjection in English but explained it to convey its pragmatic meaning.

3.3 Aesthetic Quality

Fousheng Liuchi has long been acclaimed as beautiful as a crystal because it narrates touching love between an affectionate couple, depicts a dreamed life accompanied by paintings and poetry and uses enchanting language. So does Lin’s translation. Lin’s version is widely known for its beauty in sound, meaning and forms, conforming to his third standard of translation, aesthetic quality.

3.3.1 Retaining Beauty of Couplets

As the crystallization of Chinese people’s wisdom, couplet is an essential part of brilliant Chinese culture. Couplet, a pair of lines put up on the doors or hanging in a room, is similar to poetry in that both of them consist of contrastive lines. The two lines of a couplet must meet the following requirements. Firstly, two lines must have the same number of characters and corresponding characters must have the same part of speech. Secondly, the tone-pattern of a character in one line must be the reverse of that of corresponding character in another line. There are two tone patterns, the level tone and the oblique tone. Thirdly, the last character in the first line must be of an oblique tone while that in the second line of an level line. Fourthly, the two lines and corresponding characters must be related in meaning. Take the following noted couplet put on the walls of the Yellow Stork Tower for example.

“何时黄鹤重来，且共倒金樽，浇洲渚千年芳草。
但见白云飞去，更谁吹落笛，落江城五月梅花。”

“When the yellow stork comes again,
   Let’s together empty the golden goblet,
   Pouring wine-offering
   Over the thousand-year green meadow
   On the isle.

Just look at the white clouds sailing off
   And who will play the jade flute
   Sending its melodies
   Down the fifth-moon plum-blossoms
   In the city?” (ibid., 319)

The original couplet consists of two lines, which follow rules of couplet strictly. Both lines have 18 characters and parts of speech of corresponding characters are the same, such as 黄鹤 and 白云 (both of them are noun phrases), 倒金樽 and 吹落笛 (both of them are verb phrases). Besides, each character has the opposite tone patterns with its corresponding character of the other
line, such as 黄鹤 (oblique tone) and 白云 (level tone). The last character of each line, 草 (oblique tone) and 花 (level tone), also follows the third rule. As for the fourth rule, the two lines respectively alluded to two poems about the Yellow Stork Tower, that is, *the Yellow Stork Tower* (《黄鹤楼》) by Cui Hao and a poem, (《与史郎中饮听黄鹤楼上吹笛》) by Li Bai.

Obviously, English lines here also retained the aesthetic quality of the Chinese lines. The two stanzas almost have the same number of words and corresponding Chinese characters are translated into phrases with the same parts of speech and serving similar function in the sentence. For example, Zhouzhu (洲渚) and Jiangcheng (江城) are translated into the prepositional phrases “On the isle” and “In the city” to serve as place adverbial.

On the other hand, owing to linguistic difference between SR and TR, translator cannot but discard the tone patterns. When dealing with the parallel structure, Lin replaced it with stanzas of English poems, the inverted pyramid. The pyramid gives prominence to the contrast of meaning and maintain beauty of form. For instance, yellow stork contrasted with white clouds and thousand year green meadows contrasted with fifth-moon plum-blossoms.

3.3.2 The Adaptation of Figures of Speech

(1) “四山抱列如城，缺西南一角，遥见一水 浮 天，风帆 隐 隐，即太湖也。”

“On all sides we were surrounded by a girdle of mountains like a city wall, broken only at the south-western corner where we got a glimpse of water joining the sky at the horizon with some sailing boats dimly discernible on it, this being the Taihu lake.” (ibid., 297)

The Chinese lines are quite poetic and melodic. For one thing, Shen Fu used a simile to compare surrounding mountains to a city wall. Secondly, as to the remote scene of water joining the water, he used the verb, jin (浸), denoting immersion, to make the tranquil scene rise in one’s mind immediately. The remote blue sky seemed to be immersed in the clear water. Thirdly, the reduplicated word, yinyin (隐 隱), not only makes the melody harmonious, but also shows a picturesque landscape, in which a tiny and solitary boat floats on an immense and calm lake.

In translation Lin Yutang took literary style of the Chinese version into account. When it comes to the simile, he further compared surrounding mountains to a girdle to render the elegance and majesty of mountains. With regard to a place not surrounded by mountains, Lin Yutang continues to use the comparison between mountain and girdle, so he described the mountain group as broken. In this way, the mountains’ image appears vividly and appealingly before one’s eyes. In regards with the reduplicated words, yinyin, Lin Yutang reproduced rhythmic effect with alliteration, “dimly discernible”. Besides, the alliteration also stresses the tininess of the boat.

(2) “风动竹梢，如翻麦浪。”

“we saw the bamboo trees bent before the wind in swaying billows like a wheat field bowing before a summer breeze.” (ibid., 297)

The source text uses a simile to compare the shape of bamboo in the wind to billowing wheat field. Furthermore, this sentence depicts a dynamic and appealing picture via two verbs, 动 and 翻. To reproduce the vital and vibrant picture, he personified bamboo trees and a wheat field as a person by adding such words as “bent” and “bowing”.

(3) “庭阶石础苔积如绣”

“On the steps and the stone structures there was a thick layer of moss like fine velvet” (ibid., 296)

The original line already depicts a picture for us with steps and stone structures grown with
a profusion of mosses, as beautiful as embroidery. But more surprisingly, Lin Yutang changed the
metaphor’s vehicle into “velvet”. “Velvet” gives a visual impact and highlights the smooth surface
in that velvet itself is brilliant in color and smooth in feeling while “embroidery” only stresses
delicate pattern of green mosses. We know that velvet is a type of cloth made of silk with a thick
soft surface. Only by using one word, “velvet”, Lin Yutang portrayed a picturesque corner of a
temple.

4 Conclusion

Lin Yutang’s contribution in terms of translation theory consists in three points. First of all,
translation is an art, requiring translators to hold a scrupulous attitude towards it. Then, he put
forward three criteria and made aesthetic quality as the ultimate criteria. Finally, he is the first
person to base translation on psychology and language, with a view to making translators pay
attention to both languages and psychology.

Based on the study of *Six Chapters of a Floating Life*, the thesis gives an in-depth study of
his criteria. As to faithfulness, four points, sentence-for-sentence translation, conveying feeling
tone, non-absolute faithfulness and being fluent, need attention. Sentence-for-sentence translation
is the opposite of word-for-word translation advocated by Lu Xun. This accords with Lin’s
pioneering translation ideas that words’ meaning varies with contexts. Conveying feeling tones
reflect that Lin Yutang proposed to transmit the spirit of the source text rather than only
translating literal meanings. As for smoothness, Lin emphasized the great importance of
acceptability of translations, which is embodied in the way he dealt with implicit sentences,
culture-bound words, parallel sentences and interjections. The aesthetic quality is his ultimate
pursuit, embodied in his way maintained the beauty of couplets and some poetic sentences.

In a word, Lin Yutang’s three translation criteria breaks new ground for the development of
translation theory.

Bibliography


A Tentative Analysis of Lin Yutang’s Three Translation Criteria
Based on a Case Study of Lin Yutang’s Translation of Six Chapters of a Floating Life
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Abstract: Lin Yutang’s three translation criteria have long been eclipsed by Yan Fu’s three translation criteria in that most people equate them. In the present thesis, the author would combine Lin Yutang’s translation of Six Chapters of a Floating to probe into the essence of Lin Yutang’s theory and find out its contribution for the development of translation theory.

Key words: Lin Yutang, Six Chapters of a Floating Life, three translation standards, translation theory