

A translation commentary on *Where the Light Enters*: challenges and strategies in memoir translation

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Abstract. This paper presents a translation commentary on the first eight chapters of *Where the Light Enters* by Jill Biden, a memoir that reflects personal, cultural, and emotional experiences. It explores the challenges involved in translating a contemporary autobiographical text from English into Chinese and considers possible ways of addressing them. The analysis focuses on three aspects: understanding the source text in English, selecting appropriate expressions in the target language, and maintaining the original tone and style. It examines issues such as culturally specific items, idiomatic expressions, context-dependent meanings, and grammatical differences between English and Chinese. Drawing on Nida's dynamic equivalence, Newmark's communicative translation, and Vinay and Darbelnet's procedures, the study shows how strategies such as literal translation, free translation, and transposition can be applied, often in combination, to improve translation quality. The findings highlight the importance of linguistic competence, cultural awareness, contextual sensitivity, and careful revision and offer practical insights for translating culturally rich texts.

Keywords: translation commentary, memoir translation, cultural specificity, dynamic equivalence, translation strategies

1. Introduction

1.1. Source text

The book I chose to translate is *Where the Light Enters* [1], first published in 2019. The source language of the book is English. The author of the book, Jill Tracy Biden (3 June 1951 -), née Jacobs, and formerly known by her surname Stevenson, is a community college professor and served as former First Lady of the United States of America, and wife of the 46th President of the United States of America, Joe Biden.

This memoir offers a candid and intimate portrayal of the life of a woman who has navigated multiple roles as a daughter, mother, teacher, and First Lady of the United States. It chronicles her childhood, rebellious adolescence, first marriage, and ultimately her life with Joe Biden. The book consists of 15 chapters, of which the first eight (96 pages out of the total 210) were translated for this study.

Where the Light Enters is a candid and heartwarming glimpse into the creation of a beloved American family and the life of the woman at its centre [1]. This is the story of how Jill built a family and a life of her own. From the pranks she played to keep everyone laughing to the traditions she formed that helped carry

them through tragedy, hers is the spirited journey of a woman embracing many roles. From Chapter 1 to Chapter 3, the book recounts the story of Jill's childhood, her rebellious adolescence, as well as the story of her parents and wider family. She also mentions her first marriage. The second half tells the story of her marriage to Joe Biden and her becoming his second wife after the failure of her first marriage. The memoir also shares the life stories she experienced with her husband, Joe Biden. The process of writing a translation commentary requires careful reflection on the decisions made during the translation process [2].

2. Challenges in translation

As a non-native English speaker, I encountered several challenges during the translation process. This section presents these challenges, organised around three key areas: understanding the source text, finding equivalents in the target language, and maintaining the original tone and style. Each area is illustrated with specific examples. When documenting translation challenges, it is important to present them in a clear and structured manner [3].

2.1. Translation problems

2.1.1. *Understanding the source text*

One of the primary challenges was gaining a deep and accurate understanding of the source text. Initially, I began translating without first reading the entire text or even whole paragraphs. This led to a fragmented understanding and compromised both accuracy and coherence. To address this, I adopted a pre-translation reading strategy to grasp the overall content, structure, and context. The following subsections outline specific sub-challenges related to context, coherence, and authorial intention.

(1) Inadequate understanding of context: Because I did not read through the whole text or entire paragraphs, I did not have a deep understanding of the context of some sentences, resulting in an inability to accurately convey the meaning of the source text when translating. For example, when translating a text describing the relationship between characters, I did not realise which specific characters were being referred to by certain pronouns, resulting in unclear references in the target text.

Example 1: Historical and Cultural Context

Source text: "It was a freezing Monday night in 1969 when a group of college friends and I gathered around a small television in a Newark Delaware apartment. We watched in nervous silence as men in dark suits took their places next to a big glass jar. One of the men reached in pulled out a blue pill-shaped capsule and handed it to another man in a suit. He opened it unfurled a slip of paper that had been tucked inside and read aloud: 'September 14'. For the first time since World War II young men were being drafted to military service so they could join the fight in Vietnam" [1].

Target text: "1969年的一个寒冷的周一晚上,我和一群大学朋友坐在特拉华州纽瓦克的一间公寓里,围着一台小电视机观看节目.我们紧张地沉默着,看到穿着深色西装的男人们走到一个大玻璃罐子旁边.其中的一个人,把伸手进去,拿出一个蓝色药丸形状的胶囊,递给另一个穿西装的人.他打开了胶囊,展开里面的一张纸条.他大声念道: '9月14日'. 从第二次世界大战以来,这是年轻人首次被征召入伍,以加入越南战争".

Problem: Because of a lack of background knowledge of "blue pill-shaped capsule" in the Vietnam War, I initially misunderstood its symbolic significance and practical function.

Solution: By consulting historical materials, I gained a clearer understanding of the symbolic significance of these capsules in the conscription process during the Vietnam War and clarified this meaning appropriately in the target text.

Example 2: Political and Social Changes

Source text: "Even so our life in Willow Grove still felt removed from tumultuous politics—the protests and legislative battles the rise of counterculture. My days revolved around school Girl Scout meetings cheerleading and visits to the Dairy Queen. My mom and dad never talked openly about politics—though we knew they were registered Republicans. We saw glimpses of what was going on in the world in our newspapers we heard parents whisper about drugs and rock 'n' roll but on the whole it was background noise" [1].

Target text: "尽管如此,我们在威洛格罗夫的生活仍然感觉这里的生活与动荡的政治隔绝——抗议和立法斗争,反文化的兴起.我的日子围绕着学校,女童子军的聚会,助威表演以及去冰激凌店的行程.我的父母从不公开谈论政治,哪怕我们知道他们是注册的共和党人.我们只能从报纸上了解外面世界的动态,偶尔也能听到父母低声谈论毒品和摇滚乐,但总体来说,这些都是背景噪音而已".

Problem: Translators who do not fully understand the socio-political context of the 1960s may misunderstand the actual impact of these descriptions.

Solution: By studying the socio-political environment of the 1960s, I ensured that the background information in the source text was accurately conveyed and appropriately contextualised.

Example 3: Personal Relationships and Emotional Context

Source text: "My father came from a working-class family of Italian heritage; his name Giacoppa had been changed to Jacobs when his grandfather Guytano Giacoppa arrived at Ellis Island" [1].

Target text: "我的父亲来自一个有意大利血统的工人阶级家庭;他的名字 Giacoppa在他的祖父 Guytano Giacoppa 到达埃利斯岛时被改成了Jacobs".

Problem: If translators do not understand Ellis Island's importance in immigration history, they may overlook the emotional and social significance behind the name change.

Solution: I preserved and explained the historical context of Ellis Island in the translation to help target readers understand the deeper meaning of the name change.

From these examples, it can be seen that in the process of translation, a full understanding of the context is crucial. By studying and understanding the historical, cultural, and social background of the source text, translators can convey meaning and emotion more accurately and avoid mistranslation. The translator can ensure the accuracy and consistency of the translation by consulting sources, adding annotations where appropriate, and carefully refining the context.

(2) Coherence and consistency problems: Due to the lack of an overall grasp of the full text, it is difficult to maintain consistency of content and style during the translation process. For example, certain terms or specific expressions may need to remain consistent in different parts, but these details are easily overlooked when the whole text is not read through, resulting in reduced coherence in the translation.

Example 1: Vocabulary Consistency

Source text: "Mom was the least judgmental person I've ever known—a trait I wish I had more of. She understood that people had weaknesses and her first instinct was always to help rather than criticise" [1].

Target text: "妈妈是我所认识的人当中最不带偏见的人——这是我希望自己能更多拥有的特质.她理解人们有弱点,而她的第一反应总是去帮助别人,而不是批评".

Problem: Inconsistent use of "妈妈" (mom) versus "母亲" (mother) appeared in different parts of the translation, and these terms needed to be standardised.

Solution: I chose a context-sensitive approach. In most cases, I translated "mom" and "dad" as "母亲" and "父亲" to convey the solemn and respectful tone appropriate for a memoir reflecting on her parents with admiration and longing. However, in more intimate or colloquial contexts, I occasionally used "妈妈" and "爸爸" to preserve the warmth and immediacy of the original.

(3) Misunderstanding the intention of the source text: Due to insufficient understanding of the topic of the source text and the author's intention, I sometimes misinterpreted certain sentences, resulting in translations that deviated from the true meaning of the source text. For example, expressions containing metaphors or cultural contexts could easily lose their intended nuance if the meaning behind them was not fully understood.

Example 1: Metaphor

Source text: "Winnie-the-Pooh author A. A. Milne once wrote, 'One of the advantages of being disorderly is that one is constantly making exciting discoveries'" [1].

Target text: "《小熊维尼》的作者A.A.米尔恩曾写道: '杂乱无章的一个好处就是,你总能不断地有令人兴奋的发现'".

Problem: Without recognising the metaphorical nuance of "disorderly", a translator might render it literally as "无序" (wuxu, meaning chaotic or disorderly), thereby losing the original's playful humour and self-deprecating tone.

Solution: The key is to grasp the metaphorical sense of "disorderly" and select a Chinese equivalent that conveys both the literal meaning and the underlying humour. In this case, "杂乱无章" (zaluan wuzhang) was chosen for its colloquial tone and implicit playfulness.

Example 2: Emotional Nuance

Source text: "Years later there is no sound I miss as much as my mother's voice on the phone. Not what she said but simply the notes the tones the rhythm of her sighs" [1].

Target text: "许多年后,没有什么声音比我母亲电话里的声音更让我怀念.不是她说了什么内容,而是她的音调,音色和叹息的节奏让我怀念".

Problem: A literal interpretation of "notes" could lead to the target text "音符" (yin fu, musical notes), which would obscure the intended emotional nuance and fail to capture the lyrical quality of the source text.

Solution: Recognising that "notes" here refers to vocal intonation rather than musical notation, I chose "语调" (yudiao, intonation) to preserve the original's delicate emotional resonance.

After recognising these problems, I took several steps to improve the quality of my translation: reading through the full text or complete paragraphs in advance to ensure comprehensive understanding; taking notes and adding annotations to maintain consistency in terminology; consulting relevant sources or experts for uncertain expressions; and proofreading repeatedly after the first draft. Through these measures, I gradually improved my understanding of the source text and the quality of the target language, achieving greater stylistic coherence and fidelity to the original tone.

2.1.2. Finding equivalents in the target language

In this process of translation, finding equivalent expressions between Chinese characters and English is a challenging task. The difficulty of achieving equivalence arises mainly from the differences between the two languages in terms of vocabulary, grammar, culture, and expression. This challenge is reflected in the following aspects:

(1) Vocabulary-Level Differences: Chinese characters and English words often have no one-to-one correspondence at the vocabulary level. For example, direct equivalents often do not exist for brand names, food items, or units of measurement.

Example 1: Brand Names

Source text: "I loved this tradition, and I felt immensely proud of my dad, so handsome in his dark suit, sometimes wearing a Stetson hat, and always smelling like Old Spice aftershave" [1].

Target text: "我很喜欢这个传统,而且我为我的父亲感到无比自豪,他穿着深色西装非常英俊,有时戴着斯泰森帽,总是散发着老香料(Old Spice品牌的男人剃须后抹的润肤液)的剃须水味道".

Problem: "Old Spice" does not have a direct corresponding word in Chinese.

Strategy: By retaining the brand name in the translation and adding an explanation to explain its meaning, readers can understand the cultural background represented by the brand.

Example 2: Units of Measurement

Source text: "It was the summer after my sixth-grade year, and Mom had brought home a couple of bushels of fresh Jersey tomatoes" [1].

Target text: "那是我六年级毕业后的夏天,母亲带回了几蒲式耳(谷物和水果的容量单位,相当于8加仑)新鲜的泽西番茄".

Strategy: I retained the original name with a brief Chinese annotation to preserve cultural authenticity while ensuring reader comprehension. "Bushels" does not have a direct corresponding unit in Chinese, and target readers may not be familiar with it. Even when translated as "蒲式耳", the meaning remains unclear without explanation. Therefore, adding an annotation helps maintain the original format while making the reference accessible to the target readers.

2) Culturally specific vocabulary: Many English terms contain cultural connotations that are difficult to match fully in Chinese. Terms related to family relationships, for example, require culturally appropriate translation.

Example 1: Family Identity

Source text: "As the oldest in the family" [1].

Initial Target text: "作为家中最老的人" (the oldest person)

Revised Target text: "作为家中的长姐" (the eldest sister)

Reason: After reading the whole paragraph, the context clarified that she was the eldest daughter in the family, not the oldest person in the family. In Chinese culture, "长姐" precisely refers to the eldest sister among siblings, and is therefore more accurate and culturally appropriate.

Example 2: In-laws

Source text: "To this day, in addition to being my sister-in-law, Valerie is one of my closest friends and most trusted confidantes" [1].

Target text: "小姑子"

Reason: Since Valerie is Joe Biden's younger sister, the Chinese term "小姑子" correctly distinguishes the husband's sister from her own sister. This avoids the ambiguity of the general term "法律意义上的姐姐或妹妹" (sister-in-law in the legal sense), making the translation more accurate.

Example 3: Translation of Grandparents

Source text: "grandparents" or "grandma" and "grandpa" [1].

Direct Target text: "外祖父" and "外祖母"

Revised Target text: "马·戈弗雷外婆" and "雅各布斯奶奶"

Reason: In this book, the author distinguishes between her maternal and paternal grandparents by referring to them by their surnames (Godfrey and Jacobs). A direct translation using "外祖父/外祖母" would lose this distinction and potentially confuse readers about family relationships. By retaining the surnames, such as "马·戈弗雷外婆" (maternal grandmother) and "雅各布斯奶奶" (paternal grandmother), I preserved the clarity of the source text and made the family structure easier for Chinese readers to understand.

2.1.3. *Maintaining the tone and style*

One of the key challenges in translating a book from English to Chinese is maintaining the original tone and style, which together form the soul of the text. Tone refers to the author's attitude, feelings, and personality conveyed through the writing, while style encompasses the unique way the author uses language, including word choice, sentence structure, and literary devices. Ensuring that these elements of the source text are

preserved during the translation process is crucial, as they directly affect the readers' understanding and perception of the text.

Example 1: Nostalgic Tone

Source text: "A girl I barely know anymore stares out at me from a grainy wedding photo" [1]. Target text: "一个我几乎不再熟悉的女孩从一张模糊的婚礼照片中盯着我看". Challenge: Descriptive language in English carries a nostalgic and sentimental tone, which needs to be conveyed through delicate language in Chinese.

Strategy: Using "模糊" (fuzzy) and "盯着" (staring) retains the nostalgic, intimate quality of the original.

Example 2: Humour and Contrast

Source text: "She might have meant that as an insult but I took it as a compliment" [1]. Target text: "她可能本意是侮辱我,但我却当作是夸奖".

Strategy: Directly contrasting "侮辱" (insult) and "夸奖" (praise) preserves the original's sharp, humorous tone.

Example 3: Playful Humour

Source text: "That was a satisfying revenge for a while until my mother caught me and put an end to it" [1].

Target text: "这种报复让我一时感到满意,直到我妈妈发现并制止了我".

Challenge: To convey the "satisfying revenge" sentiment and the playful humour of the source text.

Solution: The phrase "让我一时感到满意" (let me feel satisfied for a while) captures the fleeting, almost childish satisfaction while maintaining the relaxed tone of the source text.

Example 4: Colloquial Tone

Source text: "Working bankers' hours nine-to-five" [1].

Target text: "银行的工作时间是,朝九晚五".

Challenge: The translation should maintain the colloquial and relaxed tone of the source text.

Solution: The Chinese expression "朝九晚五" (nine-to-five) carries the same casual, everyday register.

Example 5: Emotional Intensity

Source text: "Ma Godfrey could hardly hide her disappointment when I was born" [1].

Target text: "我出生时,戈德弗里奶奶几乎无法掩饰住她的失望".

Challenge: The translator must convey the emotional weight and tone of "could hardly hide her disagreement".

Solution: The Chinese expression "几乎掩饰不住" (could hardly conceal) effectively mirrors the emotional tension in the source text.

Maintaining the tone and style of the source text is a significant challenge in the translation process. By carefully selecting the vocabulary and sentence structure, the translator can preserve the emotional colour and narrative style of the source text as much as possible. This requires a deep understanding of both languages and a high degree of sensitivity to the nuances of the source text.

2.2. Types of difficulties while translating the text

When translating culturally specific content, the difficulty lies in finding equivalent expressions that resonate within the target culture. When dealing with culturally specific items, an integrated approach that considers textual, cultural, and linguistic aspects is particularly useful [4].

2.2.1. Culturally specific items

Culturally specific items are elements deeply rooted in a particular culture and may not have direct equivalents in other languages or cultures. These items can include food, traditions, and lifestyle practices. When

translating such items, the key is to maintain their original cultural character while ensuring that the target readers can understand them.

Example 1: Italian Proverb (Cultural Habit)

Source text: "The Italians have a saying 'Finire a tarallucci e vino'—to finish with tarallucci (little cookies) and wine. It essentially means no matter our differences or our arguments during dinner we finish as family. All's well that ends well—or at least I think you're dead wrong but let's put it aside so we can enjoy the pleasures of life together" [1].

Target text: "意大利语中有一句谚语, 'Finire a tarallucci e vino'—以小饼和葡萄酒结束.这句话的本质意义是,不管我们在晚餐时有什么分歧或争吵,我们最终都是一家人.结局好,皆大欢喜—至少,即便我认为你完全错了,但我们还是别管这些争论了,先一起享受生活的乐趣".

Difficulty: "Finire a tarallucci e vino" is an Italian proverb with a strong cultural background. This expression and the cultural habits behind it do not have directly corresponding concepts in other languages and cultures.

Solution: I translated it as "以小饼和葡萄酒结束" (end with small biscuits and wine) and added an explanation of its symbolic meaning of reconciliation and familial harmony.

2.2.2. Idioms

Idioms are a kind of expression whose meanings are not deducible from the literal meanings of the words they contain. Translating idioms requires finding equivalent expressions that convey the same meaning in the target language.

Example 1: Idiom: "Butting heads"

Source text: "Butting heads with my father's disciplinarian parenting" [1].

Target text: "与父亲的严厉教养作对".

Difficulty: The idiom "butting heads" refers to having a conflict or argument.

Solution: In Chinese, "作对" (zuo dui) effectively conveys the idea of being in conflict with someone.

Example 2: Idiom: "Push the boundaries"

Source text: "I was the first one to push the boundaries my parents set" [1].

Target text: "我是第一个挑战父母设定界限的人".

Difficulty: The idiom "push the boundaries" means to challenge limits.

Solution: The expression "挑战界限" (tiaozhan jiexian) accurately captures this meaning in Chinese.

Example 3: Idiom: "All's well that ends well"

Source text: "The Italians have a saying 'Finire a tarallucci e vino'—to finish with tarallucci (little cookies) and wine. It essentially means no matter our differences or our arguments during dinner we finish as family. All's well that ends well—or at least I think you're dead wrong but let's put it aside so we can enjoy the pleasures of life together" [1].

Target text: "意大利语中有一句谚语, 'Finire a tarallucci e vino'—以小饼子和葡萄酒结束.这句话的本质意义是,不管我们在晚餐时有什么分歧或争吵,我们最终都是一家人.结局好,皆大欢喜—至少,即便我认为你完全错了,但我们还是别管这些争论了,先一起享受生活的乐趣".

Difficulty: "All's well that ends well" is a classic English idiom derived from Shakespeare. It is widely used in English culture, indicating that things are finally settled satisfactorily. There is no exact one-to-one equivalent in Chinese.

Solution: I chose the Chinese idiom "皆大欢喜" (jie da huan xi), meaning "everyone is happy", which conveys a similar sense of a satisfactory conclusion while maintaining natural fluency in the context.

2.2.3. Context

When translating, it is necessary to accurately grasp the source text's context to ensure accuracy and consistency in the target text. This includes understanding the overall emotional tone, character relationships, and the background of events.

Example 1: Complex Emotional Contradiction

Source text: "I decided I wasn't going to spend another minute with a woman who might love me but sure didn't like me much so I called a cab company to pick me up" [1].

Target text: "我决定不再和那个可能爱我但不喜欢我的女人多待一分钟了,所以我叫了一辆出租车来接我".

Difficulty: The phrase "who might love me but sure didn't like me much" expresses a complex emotional contradictions, combining affection and emotional distance.

Solution: When translating this delicate emotion into Chinese, I paid close attention to tone and nuance to ensure the feelings in the source text were accurately conveyed.

2.2.4. Language

In translating from English to Chinese, some sentences pose difficulties in terms of grammatical structure, which was one of the many difficulties I encountered while translating this book.

Example 1: Sentence Structure and Inner Monologue

Source text: "He was thirty-one and wore a perfect suit and leather loafers. He looked so straight laced that the first thought that popped into my head was 'My God what have I gotten myself into?' The second was 'Oh well. It's only one date'" [1].

Target text: "他当时三十一岁,穿着一套完美的西装和一双皮鞋.他看起来如此一本正经,我脑子里冒出的第一个念头是:'天哪,我这是怎么搞的呀?'接着又一想:'算了,就一次约会而已'".

Analysis:

(1) Grammatical structure: The original sentence contains two independent clauses joined by the conjunction "and". In Chinese, this structure needs to be broken into shorter sentences or separated with punctuation to maintain fluency.

(2) Inner monologue: In English, inner thoughts are embedded directly within the sentence. In Chinese, they must be expressed using quotation marks, requiring careful handling to ensure clarity and naturalness.

Example 2: Complex Sentences

Source text: "I used to love going to Pa Godfrey's drugstore imagining my parents lingering at the soda fountain and chatting with each other across the counter in their younger days. But it was just as easy to imagine Ma Godfrey giving my father a dirty look from across the store as he flirted with my mother" [1].

Target text: "我曾经喜欢去戈弗雷爷爷的药店,想象着我父母年轻时在汽水机旁流连,在柜台两边聊天.但也很容易想象戈弗雷奶奶在店的另一边对我父亲翻白眼,因为他在跟我母亲调情".

Analysis:

(1) Tense processing: The source text uses the past tense, while in Chinese, the tense does not change but is conveyed through context rather than verb changes.

(2) Translation of complex sentences: English sentences are long and contain multiple verb phrases ("imagining" and "chatting"). When translating into Chinese, it is necessary to divide the sentence or adjust the word order to ensure smoothness and readability.

Example 3: Negative Structures and Parentheticals

Source text: "Ma wasn't a warm woman, not with any of us girls, but her lack of affection seemed most pronounced with me" [1].

Initial incorrect target text: "马·戈弗雷不是一个热情的女人,但不是和所有女孩在一起时候都这样,但她对我的冷淡似乎是最明显的" (implying she was warm with other girls but not with me).

Final target text: "马·戈弗雷对我们这些女孩都不是很温暖,但她对我的冷淡最为明显".

Analysis:

(1) Processing of negative structures: The words "wasn't" and "not" in the original sentence form a double negative construction. In Chinese, negative constructions often need to be reorganised to avoid ambiguity and convey the meaning clearly.

(2) Translation of parenthetical: "Not with any of us girls" functions as a parenthetical phrase. I translated it as "对我们这些女孩都不热情" to integrate it smoothly into the sentence without disrupting fluency.

(3) Translation of emphasis: The phrase "seemed most pronounced with me" emphasises that the lack of affection was particularly evident toward the author. The Chinese translation "对我尤其冷淡" accurately conveys this emphasis.

3. Strategies/methods

3.1. Approaches used to overcome translation difficulties

3.1.1. *Literal translation*

Literal translation refers to rendering the source text word-for-word or structure-for-structure. This method is appropriate when the structure and meaning of the source text can be directly transferred into the target language without loss of clarity or naturalness [5].

Example:

Source text: "It was a slightly ramshackle little house and there wasn't a piece of new furniture to be found" [1].

Target text: "那是一幢有些破旧的小房子,里面找不到一件新家具".

Analysis: This literal translation ensures that the descriptive details of the source text are retained, and the sentence structure is naturally expressed in Chinese.

3.1.2. *Free translation*

Free translation focuses on conveying the meaning of the source text rather than adhering closely to its wording. This method is especially effective when cultural differences require flexible adaptation to ensure naturalness in the target language [6].

Example:

Source text: "Joe used to joke that I did it because I was tired of our mail being addressed to Senator and Mrs. Biden" [1].

Target text: 乔曾开玩笑说,我这么做是因为我厌倦了我们的信件总是被寄往"拜登参议员"和"拜登夫人"这样的地址了.

Analysis: Using free translation preserves the humor of the source text while rendering the expression more natural and accessible in Chinese.

3.1.3. *Transposition*

Transposition refers to changing the syntactic structure of the source text to adapt to the syntax of the target text while maintaining the original meaning [7].

Example:

Source text: "In the winter we'd slip out of bed in our flannel nightgowns and pull our covers down onto the black linoleum floor which was heated to warm ourselves up" [1].

Target text: "冬天的时候,我们会穿着法兰绒睡衣从床上爬起来,然后把被子拉下来盖在铺着黑色油毡的地面上,这样地板就能通过加热来为我们取暖".

Analysis: By adjusting the grammatical structure, the Chinese sentence becomes smoother and more natural while preserving the detailed description of the source text.

3.2. Reasons for choosing the methods

3.2.1. *Cultural relevance*

Literal translation is chosen when the source text can be directly understood by the target readers, ensuring that its meaning and context are preserved [5]. This is particularly effective when translating factual or descriptive content where cultural context does not significantly alter the meaning.

3.2.2. *Flexibility and adaptation*

Free translation is used when dealing with idiomatic expressions or cultural references that lack direct equivalents in the target text [5, 6]. This method ensures that the translation resonates with readers while preserving the intention and emotional impact of the source text.

3.2.3. *Grammatical and structural differences*

Due to the significant grammatical differences between English and Chinese, transposition is particularly important [7]. This method ensures the readability and fluency of the target text, allowing the sentence structure to appear natural and coherent in the target text.

3.3. Scholarly supported justification

3.3.1. *Eugene Nida's dynamic equivalence*

Dynamic equivalence focuses on conveying the intended meaning and effect of the source text when a literal translation would not be accurate or natural in the target text [6]. Nida's theory supports the use of free translation to achieve equivalent impact on the target audience.

3.3.2. *Vinay and Darbelnet's translation procedures*

Vinay and Darbelnet describe methods such as transposition and modulation to adapt the translation to the target language's structure [7]. These methods are justified when literal translation does not convey the correct meaning or when a more idiomatic expression is required.

3.3.3. *Peter Newmark's communicative translation*

Communicative translation aims to produce the same effect on the target readership as was produced by the source text on its original readership [5]. This supports the use of free translation and transposition to ensure that the translated text is meaningful and effective for the target readers.

These strategies and methods provide a theoretical basis for overcoming translation difficulties and ensuring that the translated text is both accurate and culturally relevant to the target readers.

4. Suggestions for translation practice

The following aspects should be emphasised when translating. Previous scholarship on translation commentary suggests that systematic reflection is essential for developing translation competence [8].

4.1. Conduct thorough pre-translation research

Before translating, read the entire text to grasp its narrative arc, character relationships, and overarching themes. Research the historical, political, and cultural contexts that inform the narrative.

4.2. Maintain emotional consistency

Use vocabulary and syntax that align with the source text's emotional register. A nostalgic passage may require softer, more reflective language, while a humorous one may call for lively, colloquial expressions.

4.3. Handle cultural references deliberately

For unfamiliar cultural items, consider retaining the original term with explanation (via footnotes or in-text gloss) rather than omitting it or forcing domestication. As Venuti [9] notes, the translator's visibility in handling cultural references can significantly affect how the text is received.

4.4. Adapt sentence structure

Be prepared to break long English sentences into shorter, more digestible Chinese sentences to improve fluency and readability.

4.5. Systematically post-edit

After completing the first draft, review the translation holistically. Pay particular attention to consistency in terminology, character names, and stylistic tone. Post-editing is not merely proofreading but a critical phase for refining the translation's overall coherence and impact.

5. Conclusion

As a translator, after completing the translation of this book, I deeply feel that translation is not merely a process of linguistic conversion, but also a bridge for cultural exchange and emotional transmission. Throughout this project, I have gained valuable literacy and skills that not only enhance my translation ability but also deepen my understanding and respect for the profession. Furthermore, this process has made me believe that a translator should have the following abilities:

5.1. Cultural sensitivity

Throughout the translation process, I came to deeply appreciate the importance of understanding and respecting cultural differences between the source and target text. By developing a thorough understanding of the cultural background, I can more accurately convey culturally specific expressions, allowing target readers to better grasp the author's intentions and emotional nuances. This cultural sensitivity is an indispensable quality in translation work.

5.2. Emotional communication

A translator's responsibility is to accurately convey the emotions and personal style of the original text. In this book, the author expresses deep love for her family and thoughtful reflections on life, and these emotional tones need to be fully preserved in the translation. By carefully selecting vocabulary and expressions close to everyday life, I tried to maintain the warmth and intimacy of the original text so that readers can resonate emotionally with the author.

5.3. Background knowledge

The translation process requires not only linguistic ability but also extensive background knowledge. When translating sections involving historical events or social contexts, I paid attention to accurately conveying the

seriousness and impact of these events, and I supplemented background information when necessary to help readers better understand their significance. In this way, the translation becomes not only linguistically accurate but also credible and informative.

5.4. Fluency and readability

During the translation process, I adjusted sentence structures according to the reading habits of Chinese readers to make the target text more fluent and easier to read. Through appropriate sentence separation and structural adjustment, I ensured that the translation aligns with these reading habits while maintaining the source text's original style. This not only improves readability but also enhances the reader's experience.

5.5. Professional ethics and sense of responsibility

As translators, we must uphold strong professional ethics and a sense of responsibility. Every detail requires careful attention to ensure accuracy and high quality. Throughout the translation process, I constantly reviewed and revised my work, striving to do my best. Translation is not only a skill, but also a responsibility, requiring us to approach every project with professionalism and rigour. Ethical considerations in translator training and practice, as discussed by Baker and Maier [10], are essential to maintaining professional standards.

One aspect I must emphasise in this project is the importance of post-editing. Post-editing plays a vital role in translation work. It is not only a process of quality control but also a key step in improving the overall quality of the translation and the reader's experience. By rereading the entire text and revising repeatedly, especially the titles of each chapter, I worked hard to find the most suitable and resonant translations.

Through this translation work, I have not only improved my linguistic abilities but also gained a deeper understanding of cultural interpretation and emotional transmission. Translation is a complex and challenging task, but it is also full of intellectual reward and a sense of achievement. I hope that through my efforts, the translation of this book can accurately convey the author's intentions and emotions, enabling Chinese readers to feel the warmth and strength of the original text.

As a translator, I will continue to learn and improve my skills, striving to provide readers with better translations. I am grateful for the growth and insights gained from this experience, and I hope to have more opportunities in the future to build bridges between languages and cultures.

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