

A Study on the C-E Translation Practice of *Biographies of Silk Celebrities* (Excerpt) from the Perspective of Catford's Shifts Theory

Linbo Xiao¹ & Weihua Hu¹

¹ Xi'an Polytechnic University, China

Correspondence: Linbo Xiao, Xi'an Polytechnic University, China.

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Abstract

Nowadays, many outstanding traditional Chinese cultures have stepped onto the global stage and gained recognition from the public. Therefore, more classic works of excellent traditional Chinese culture should be introduced to foreign countries, making contributions to the diversity and inclusiveness of world culture and promoting a more harmonious global development. Chinese textile and clothing culture, especially ancient Chinese silk culture, is an important aspect of translation to the outside world.

The source text for this study is selected from Chapter 2 of the book *Biographies of Silk Celebrities*. The excerpt mainly introduces the important deeds of several ancient Chinese silk craftsmen, highlighting the spirit of struggle of the older generation of industrialists. The book belongs to informative text, conveying true and objective information. It uses precise language, presents factual content, and is highly readable. However, the abundance of textile terminology, complex sentence structures, and differences in English and Chinese syntactic expressions have posed certain challenges to this translation task. To deal with these translation difficulties, translators need to apply transformation techniques reasonably during the translation process to improve the quality of the translation.

Cartford believes that when the source language is translated into the target language, meaning equivalence can be achieved by using translation shifts, breaking away from formal correspondence.

Guided by Catford's theory, this study combines the characteristics of the original text to analyze specific cases and explore various types of shifts to achieve the translation purpose. In this study, level shift includes the conversion of noun plurals and tenses. Category shift involve structural shift, class shift, and unit shift. Structural shift is mainly used for converting prepositional phrases, passive voice, and negation expressions. Class shift is mainly used to convert verbs into nouns, adjectives, and prepositions. Unit shifts is primarily used between phrases, clauses, and sentences. Through these shifts, the translation conforms to the writing conventions of the target language, is easily accepted by readers, and helps achieve the desired translation effect.

Keywords: *Biography of Silk Celebrities*, Catford's translation shifts theory, informative texts

1. Introduction

The study consists of four Chapter: introduction, literature review, case analysis, and conclusion. The first Chapter states the background of the source text, the purpose and significance of this translation practice. The second Chapter introduces the connotation of the translation shifts theory, and then presents previous studies on translation of informative text. The third Chapter mainly demonstrates the case analysis under the guidance of the translation shifts theory. And in the last Chapter, the translator summarized his gains and limitations of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

This study was based on the second Chapter of *Biography of Silk Celebrities*. Silk is one of China's greatest treasures. As early as the reign of Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty, China had opened up the famous Silk Road. The ancient Silk Road was a historical trade route connecting China and Europe. It played an important role in the culture and commerce exchanges between the two continents. However, since China was reduced to a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society in the late Qing Dynasty, the development of silk industry also stagnated. Fortunately, with the efforts of a group of enlightened people, silk education was set up and silk production technology was redeveloped, and China's silk industry was slowly revived. In recent years, China has proposed the Belt and Road Initiative, sparking more and more people's curiosity about the history of the ancient silk road as well as the silk industry. By this chance, the translation of the *Biography of Silk Celebrities* will further promote the deeds of Chinese industrialists in silk fields, and demonstrated their patriotic sentiments.

Biography of Silk Celebrities integrates the main meritorious figures, their heroic deeds and achievements in the development of modern Chinese silk industry. As a textbook for textile majors in colleges and universities, *Biography of Silk Celebrities* not only contains a lot of professional knowledge related to the silk field, but also introduces the stories of several national industrialists. The heroic deeds listed in the text will inspire the contemporary students to strive continuously to strengthen themselves, and to make it their mission to contribute to the national rejuvenation. Xi Jinping, the general secretary of the Communist Party of China

Central Committee, stressed the importance of patriotic education in today's young people and clarified that "strengthening patriotic education in the new era aims to make patriotism the faith and spiritual strength of all Chinese people to motivate their conscious actions." On the new journey ahead, today's young people will take more responsibilities to the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. It is necessary for the youth to learn from the patriotic deeds of industrialists in silk fields.

1.2 Purpose and Significance of the Report

The purpose of the study could be demonstrated in two aspects.

On the one hand, the translator will summarize the characteristics and translation strategies of biographical texts, which could be helpful in providing some reference for the translation practice of the same type of texts in the future.

On the other hand, the study integrates the typical problems and translation difficulties, provides translation principles and skills, puts forward corresponding solutions to the problems, and discusses translation methods such as the translation of culture-loaded words and the ancient Chinese classic. It provides a concrete and effective solution for the translation practice of this kind of text.

As for the significance, the author believed that it has both theoretical and practical significance.

From a theoretical standpoint, this report serves to validate the applicability of the translation shifts theory, originally posited by J.C. Catford. It acts as an empirical testament to the theory's relevance and utility in real-world translation scenarios.

From a practical perspective, in the context of the growing global receptivity to Chinese culture, this translated version is poised to play a pivotal role in promoting Chinese silk culture and the historical struggles of the Chinese people to a broader international audience.

2. Literature Review

J.C. Catford, a renowned linguist and translation theorist, is highly regarded for his systematic approach to translation theories. Among his numerous contributions, his translation shifts theory has gained widespread recognition and acclaim.

2.1 Overview of the Translation Shifts Theory

In 1965, J.C. Catford's seminal work in the field

of translation studies, *A Linguistic Theory of Translation*, was published. The Chinese version of the book, translated by Mu Lei, was released in 1991. Mu Lei emphasizes the importance of this academic work, stating that it introduces a new level of precision in analyzing translation between languages (Mu Lei, 1990: 37). In the twelfth chapter of the book, Catford introduces the concept of “translation shift”. He posits that shifts represent the formal deviations that occur when translating a source text into a target text (Catford, 1965: 73).

Catford incorporates four categories from Halliday’s systemic-functional grammar theory (structure, class, system, and unit) when examining the phenomenon of translation shifts (Huang Guowen, 2000: 15). Building on this foundation, Catford dedicates an entire chapter to discussing the types of translation shifts he has identified, placing significant emphasis on comparing the similarities and differences between the source language (SL) and target language (TL) in terms of form and structure. Catford’s comprehensive classification of various shifts effectively elucidates the practical shifts that occur during English-Chinese translation.

In the 1980s, Dutch scholar K. Van Leuven-Zwart introduced a translation shift model, which has been considered the most systematic and detailed translation shift theory to date (Munday, 2001: 63). However, the classification of this theory is often criticized for being overly intricate and cumbersome, hindering its practical application during analysis. Furthermore, the complexity of the theory requires significant effort for translators to fully understand, which consequently diminishes its overall utility (Lin Yinyin, 2010: 7). As a result, Catford’s translation shift theory is deemed more suitable as a guideline for translation practice when compared to Leuven-Zwart’s model.

2.2 Previous Studies on Translation of Informative Text

Newmark proposes suitable translation strategies for three distinct types of texts: informative texts, expressive texts, and vocative texts. These strategies are semantic translation and communicative translation, each with their own unique characteristics. Semantic translation places greater emphasis on preserving the original sentence structure and grammatical form, but may overlook effective information

transmission and the readability of the translated text (Newmark, 2001). In contrast, communicative translation is reader-centered, prioritizing reader responses and reactions above other factors. According to Newmark, “In communicative translation, translators have the right to correct or improve logic, eliminate ambiguity and verbosity, and replace obscure language with more elegant expressions” (Newmark, 2001b: 42). Consequently, Newmark asserts that communicative translation is better suited for non-literary works, such as reports and teaching materials (Newmark, 2001a: 44).

Domestically, numerous scholars have conducted extensive research on the translation of informative texts. In 2017, Zhang Linlin investigated the application of Text Typology in translating informative texts. She argued that Text Typology plays a guiding role in the translation process and demonstrated its feasibility at both lexical and syntactic levels (Zhang Linlin, 2017). Concurrently, Wang Yirong emphasized that “the translation of informative text requires high accuracy and extensive professional knowledge” (Wang Yirong, 2017). He also proposed two guiding principles for translating informative texts: faithfulness and adaptation to real-life situations. In 2019, Hu Zixuan and Bao Zhikun explored the potential for improving the efficiency of informative text translations using Tmxmall. They posited that “the purpose of informative texts is to convey information.”

Consequently, Hu Zixuan and Bao Zhikun reckon that “as long as the translation is understandable and readable, it is acceptable not to consider aesthetics or style” (Hu Zixuan & Bao Zhikun, 2019). In 2021, Huang Xiaoyi proposed three principles for translating informative texts based on their unique characteristics: faithfulness, accuracy, and fluency (Huang Xiaoyi, 2020). In the same year, Wang Xueming, a researcher specializing in language contrast and translation theory, published an article titled “Towards an Explicitation System for Chinese-English Translation of Informative Texts.” In this piece, he advocated for the use of an explicitation system in the translation of informative texts, providing valuable insights to translators working in this field.

Previous research on the translation of informative texts primarily utilizes Text Typology as a theoretical framework. However,

Text Typology does not provide specific translation strategies to directly inform translation practice. Instead, it allows translators to understand the characteristics of various text types. Consequently, the extent to which Text Typology can effectively guide translators in their work remains an open question.

In summary, these researchers have provided insights into the translation of informative texts, but rarely in conjunction with the Catford's translation shifts theory. Based on this, the translator will attempt to analyze informative texts under the guidance of Catford's translation shifts theory.

3. Case Analysis

In this chapter, by analyzing specific translation cases, the author will present the application of Catford's translation shifts theory in informative texts. The author tries to prove the feasibility of the theory in directing the translation of informative text.

3.1 Level Shifts

Catford takes the attitude that there are equivalent components from the source language to the target one in terms of the level shifts (Catford, 1965: 73). However, there is no doubt that complete equivalent translation cannot be found between phonemes and glyphs, or between them and grammar and vocabulary. Therefore, the existence of level shift only lies in grammar and vocabulary according to the chapter of Conditions of Translation Equivalence. In short, level shift is a very common transformation (Catford, 1965: 73).

3.1.1 Shifts of Tense

Tenses in English grammar signify the time an action takes place, while aspects denote the state of an action. English presents a variety of tenses, including past, present, and future tenses, among others. These tenses, along with continuous and perfect aspects, are conveyed through the transformation of verbs, a grammatical feature that doesn't exist in Chinese. English verbs possess numerous tenses and aspects absent in Chinese. However, Chinese indicates tenses through specific time adverbs and similar expressions. In the subsequent discussion, examples will be provided for further illustration.

Example 1:

ST: 这是因为汉朝有这个风气，官僚或富商家都有许多家仆在织绸，那时，丝绸就是财富，谁家织绸

多，自然财产就多，有谁不希望自己家财富多的呢？这就是霍光夫人之所以要召陈宝光妻来家织绸的原因。

TT: This was because the Han Dynasty had this fashion. Bureaucrats and wealthy merchants all had many servants weaving silk in their family. At that time, silk was viewed as wealth. Whoever weaved more silk would naturally have more wealth. Who wouldn't want to have more wealth in their family? That was why Mrs. Huo had sent for Chen Baoguang's wife to weave silk.

Analysis: In the example 1, the Chinese word “在那时” is used to express what time the action happened. Therefore, the past tense is adopted in the texts. In Chinese, “希望” marks the action to take place in the future, while the past future tense in English is represented by “would do”. Hence, it is translated into “Who wouldn't want to have more wealth in their family?”, using the English grammar that represents the past future tense, realizing the shifts from Chinese vocabulary to English grammar.

3.1.2 Shifts of Plural and Singular Forms

In Chinese, plurality is often conveyed through specific numerals or quantifiers, examples of which include terms like “双双” and “五只”. In contrast, English differentiates between singular and plural forms of countable nouns, a distinction that is not explicitly present in Chinese. Typically, the plural form of a countable noun in English is achieved by appending “s” or “es” to the word, barring certain nouns with irregular plural forms. Consequently, when translating from Chinese to English, there are shifts at both the lexical and grammatical levels.

Example 2:

ST: 朱克柔的缂丝工艺品，在当时远近闻名，成为文人墨客和官僚政客争相抢购的对象。

TT: Zhu Kerou's silk tapestry works were well-known at that time, and became exceedingly popular among literatus, bureaucrats and politicians.

Analysis: Catford thinks that it is impossible to translate between phonemes and glyph, or between either of these two levels with the grammatical or lexical level. What is left is the shift from grammar to lexis or from lexis to grammar as the only possible level shift in translation, which is very common. In the example 5, according to the connotations and

meanings of the whole sentence, there are words in the source language that clearly express the plural meaning. And the meaning of “文人墨客” mostly refers to people who read a lot and have a good knowledge about literature and culture. Thus, when translating into English, “literatus” is applied. As the words “literati” is a countable noun, then its plural form “literatus” is used to express the equivalent meaning to the source language.

3.2 Category Shifts

In Catford’s view, category shifts pertain to deviations from formal correspondence. He further delineates these shifts into four distinct types: structural shifts, class shifts, unit shifts, and intra-system shifts. Notably, given that Chinese and English originate from different language families, they exhibit no parallels in terms of linguistic characteristics or formal structures. After analyzing the features of the source text, the intra-system shifts do not occur during this translation practice.

Regarding the concept of “category,” it refers to grammatical parts of speech and encompasses various linguistic features such as number, case, aspect, person, tense, voice, and the like. The author discerns that category shifts arise when translation necessitates alterations among these aforementioned elements. Such shifts do not strictly adhere to the original form and may traverse different levels during the translation process.

3.2.1 Structure Shifts

Structure shifts are regarded by Catford as the most common and frequent shifts. They occur in total translation and to involve mostly a shift in grammatical structure. When a structure shift occurs, the grammatical components in the sentence of source language make some changes on their sequence or positions in the sentence of target language.

3.2.1.1 Shifts from Active Voice to Passive Voice

According to Lian (2010: 118), passive voice is very common in English. But in Chinese, passive voice is less commonly used. In Chinese, on the one hand, some words are regarded as the signals of passive voice such as “被”, “受”, “遭” and “挨”, etc. On the other hand, a pattern of covert passive voice “receptor subject + verbs” tends to be used frequently in Chinese to express a passive meaning (Lian: 126). In English, passive voice can be expressed through

grammar and its grammatical rule is “receptor subject + be + past participles of transitive verbs”. Suffixes “-d” or “-ed” should be added to the verbs to express the passive meaning.

Example 3:

ST: 可是这座富丽堂皇的八角佛殿, 自建造以后, 一直紧闭着大门, 除了修理外, 不准任何人打开。

TT: However, this magnificent octagonal Buddhist temple has been closed since its completion, and it is forbidden to enter except for repair.

Analysis: In Chinese, the passive voice is not usual. “被”, the passive label in Chinese, is often omitted, even the sentence has passive meaning. If the translator followed the source text, and translated it into “this magnificent octagonal Buddhist temple has closed”, the sentence would be a grammatically wrong sentence, for violating the rules of English grammar. In such case, the voice of a sentence cannot be ignored. Considering different language habit, the translator applied structural shifts and used passive voice to make it reasonable and readable for English readers.

3.2.1.2 Shifts from Pre-Attributives to Post-Attributives

In Chinese, the majority of attributives are placed before the modified word, a structure known as pre-attributives. However, in English, the expression of attributives is more flexible and varied. Certain attributives can be placed before the modified word, while others should follow it, referred to as post-attributives. In English, a single word is typically placed before the modified word as an attributive, whereas a phrase or sentence is placed after the modified word as an attributive. Consequently, it is imperative to address the positioning of attributives in Chinese-English translation practice. This requires careful consideration of the order and placement of attributives to ensure accurate and effective translation.

Example 4:

ST: 瘦长的身子, 瘦长的脸, 高颧细眼, 为人热心的窦师纶出生在一个官僚家庭。

TT: Warm-hearted Doushilun, who was characterized by thin and long figure and face, high cheekbones and narrow eyes, grew up in a bureaucratic family.

Analysis: In the source language, four phrases “瘦长的身子”, “瘦长的脸”, “高颧细眼”, and “为

人热心的” are used to describe the subject Dou Shilun. These phrases collectively portray Dou Shilun’s appearance and character. In Chinese, adjective phrases are placed before the subject due to the absence of post-positive attributives. However, English differs in this regard, allowing for both pre-positive and post-positive attributives. In the translation example, the translator employs structural shifts to convey the meaning of the first three phrases, describing Dou Shilun’s appearance, by transforming them into post-positive attributive clauses connected by the relative pronoun “who.” This approach enables a division of attributives into pre-positive and post-positive, based on the aspects they describe. The utilization of both pre-positive and post-positive attributives achieves a balanced sentence structure in the target language, enhancing its fluidity and enabling readers to better appreciate the translation effects.

3.2.1.3 Shifts from Negative Sentences to Affirmative Sentences

Both Chinese and English are with words, phrases or structures to express the negative meaning in their belonging language systems, such as “非”, “不”, “没有” are often used in Chinese and “not”, “hardly”, “no” or the negative prefix of “de-”, “un-”, “dis-” are frequently applied in English. Besides, Chinese and English also have other expression words that reads positively but shows the negative meaning, and vice versa. Thus, when translating from Chinese to English, the shifts from negative structure to the positive structure could occurred to achieve the equal meaning. In Chinese language, people tend to use the negative words or phrases to express the positive meaning in order to achieve the verbal humor or stress on the tone of the sentence. But for English, the sentence tends to come straight to the points.

To sum up, in the process of translation between Chinese and English, different translation methods should be adopted according to different situations. Under the condition of not changing the original meaning and the guidance of Catford’s structural shifts, to the greatest extent, the translation between negative sentences and positive sentences should be carried out skillfully, so as to be closest to and in line with the language habits and semantic background of the target language. The following three examples show how Catford’s

structural shifts guide this translation practice.

Example 5:

ST: 但是, 好景不长, 640 年, 高昌国被唐朝所灭。

TT: However, a sweet dream was short-lived. In 640, the kingdom of Gaochang was destroyed by the Tang Dynasty.

Analysis: At the beginning, the translator translated the sentence as “good times did not last long”. Although it has conveyed the meaning correctly, the text is somewhat verbose, which does not meet the English characteristics, being direct. In Catford’s Shifts Theory, it has mentioned that we can use grammatical way to achieve high quality translation. After thinking it over carefully, the translator translates it in a positive way, as “a sweet dream was short-lived”, clear and advanced.

3.2.2 Class Shifts

Class shifts refer to the conversion of the part of speech between two languages. According to Lian, because Chinese tends to use more verbs, it is a dynamic language. English is a static language because it tends to use more nouns (2010: 133). He also points out that Chinese is paratactic because words and clauses are not connected through linguistic form but through their implied connotations, and English is hypotactic because the words and clauses are connected through linguistic forms such as prepositions (2010: 73). Based on Catford’s Shifts Theory, specific examples will be provided to illustrate these shifts.

3.2.2.1 Shifts from Verbs to Nouns

One of the key distinctions between Chinese and English lies in their respective orientation towards verbs and nouns. Chinese tends to be more verb-oriented, while English favors the use of nouns over verbs. In this translation, the translator acknowledges this characteristic of both languages and employs a strategy where certain Chinese verbs are transformed into English nouns to maintain the smoothness of the target text. The following three examples demonstrate this shift from verbs to nouns.

Example 6:

ST: 陈宝光妻对提花织机的改革, 极大的影响了当时的丝织生产。

TT: Chen Baoguang’s wife’s improvement of jacquard loom had an important impact on silk weaving production at that time.

Analysis: in the example 15, the Chinese phrase

“影响” is a verbal phrase. If the translator uses the literal translation to translate the phrase into “affected”, it is understandable for readers but lacks of flexible. Here, the translator translates it into “had a great impact on” by using the shifts from Chinese verbs to English nouns, which is close to the English language features and fits the requirement of the informative texts.

3.2.2.2 Shifts from Verbs to Preps

As previously noted, Chinese often emphasizes verbs, whereas English, being more static in nature, leans towards nouns. Additionally, English frequently employs prepositions, many of which can convey dynamic meanings, such as “past,” “with,” and “across.” When translating a Chinese sentence containing multiple verbs into English, the translator typically renders the primary verb as the predicate and repositions the remaining verbs as prepositions, infinitives, or other grammatical forms.

Example 7:

ST: 他是宋国公族的后裔，自然曾经接受过系统的教育，成为满腹经纶、精神生活极度充实的学者。

TT: As a descendant of the Princes of Song, he was systematically educated and grew to be a well-known scholar with great learning and rich spiritual life.

Analysis: In Chinese, “是” is a verb of judgment. It is the predicate of the sentence and serves as a link between the subject and the object. The object here refers to the identity of the subject. There are three verbs in the source language: “是”, “接受” and “成为”. Because the use of verbs in Chinese is not limited by inflectional changes, the usage of verbs in Chinese is relatively flexible. English is a static language, and the overuse of verbs leads to vagueness between the primary part and the secondary part. In order to make the translation reflect the static characteristics of English, the translator adopts class shift method to translate the verb of judgment into a preposition “as”. The prepositional phrase guided by “as” serves as a complement of the sentence. The translator makes some changes to the part of speech of the word, which leads to the conciseness and acceptability of the target language.

3.2.2.3 Shifts from Verbs to Adjectives

As previously noted, Chinese is inherently dynamic in nature. When translating from Chinese to English, accommodating the more static nature of the target language often

necessitates converting Chinese verbs into English adjectives. In addressing the subsequent example sentences, the translator employs Catford’s theory of word class shifts in translation. This approach not only accentuates the desired expressive effect but also ensures fidelity to the meaning of the source text. The translator will elucidate this further using the forthcoming examples.

Example 8:

ST: 苏州缂丝发展至今已有千余年，它比一般丝织品坚厚耐磨，可较长时间保存，是我国古老传统丝织品中的一朵奇葩。

TT: Suzhou silk tapestry has been developed for more than a thousand years, which is thicker and more wear-resistant than ordinary silk fabrics and can be preserved for a longer period of time, making it a wonder of China’s ancient traditional silk fabrics.

Analysis: in the above example, “耐磨” is a verb phrase that express the good quality of Suzhou silk tapestry. When translating, the translator employs “wear-resistant” to substitute “stands wear”, which also can express a sense of consistency or compactness and also weakens the dynamic style of the sentence to fit the expressing habits of the English readers.

3.2.3 Unit Shifts

In Catford’s view, unit shifts pertain to changes across different ranks or levels of linguistic structure. Specifically, unit shifts refer to instances where translation equivalences at a particular level in the source text correspond to units at different levels in the target text. Drawing upon Halliday’s Systemic Functional Grammar, sentences can be hierarchically organized into five levels: morphemes, words, phrases or word groups, clauses, and sentences. Within the framework of Catford’s theory on translation shifts, unit shifts can transpire among these five levels.

In essence, achieving equivalence between the source and target texts does not necessarily entail a one-to-one correspondence at each linguistic level — be it phrase-to-phrase, clause-to-clause, or sentence-to-sentence. Depending on the specific requirements of the translation task, the form of the source text or the original language may be altered. This can be accomplished by selecting different translation units to facilitate the deconstruction and reorganization of the source text, thereby

executing shifts between Chinese and English at various units while preserving the meaning of the original text.

3.2.3.1 Shifts from Phrases to Words

In C-E translation, a number of phrases in the SL have no corresponding ones in the TT, so they will be shifted into other words to achieve the textual equivalence. In Chinese, the phrases of adjectives or adverbs are commonly employed, which can be replaced with a single word in its English version.

Example 9:

ST: 通过上述马钧的其人其事，我们可以看出，他为人忠厚，心地善良，有钻研精神，是个实干家和了不起的机械发明家。

TT: Through the introduction mentioned above, we can see that Ma Jun, honest and kind, is a doer and great mechanical inventor with spirit of assiduous study.

Analysis: The four-character phrases are preferred in Chinese due to their neat structures and rich connotations, which is rarely seen in English. The phrases “为人忠厚”, “心地善良” are typical four-character phrases to indicate the moral quality of Ma Jun. During the translation process, the translator finds it difficult to find equivalent phrases in the TL. Hence, they are shifted into two single words “honest” and “kind”, which makes the translation concise and clear, and the personality of Ma Jun can be shown accurately.

3.2.3.2 Shifts from Independent Sentences to Clauses

The employment of extended sentences, characterized by the inclusion of clauses, parallel structures, and other syntactic elements, is a prevalent feature in English but less so in Chinese. In the process of translating the source text, the author, guided by Catford's concept of unit shifts, observes that multiple short sentences in the original Chinese can be amalgamated into a single, complex sentence in English. This results in a shift from discrete sentences in Chinese to integrated clauses in English.

Example 10:

ST: 这里有一奇事，每天会有许多仙女在水桥上跳舞，袖摆裙飘，轻盈柔美，使路过的人观看得眼花缭乱，流连忘返。

TT: There was a miracle here, that is, there were a lot of fairies dancing on the water bridge every

day, with their sleeves and skirts floating in their soft and graceful steps. The beauty of them dazzled all of the passers-by who lingered on with no intention to leave.

Analysis: English often features extended sentences, underpinned by grammatical structures and linked by conjunctions. Theoretically, provided they adhere to grammatical standards, these sentences can be indefinitely elongated and can encompass diverse structures and content. Conversely, Chinese sentences tend to be more concise, resulting in a dispersed arrangement of clauses and forms. In Chinese syntactic construction, precedence is given to logical relationships over formal structures. As a result, during Chinese-English translation, phrases frequently translate into Chinese as clauses or full sentences.

Chinese vocabulary and English clauses operate at distinct linguistic levels and convey information in various manners, thereby indicating that transitions between them constitute unit shifts. To faithfully capture the essence of the source text, it is often necessary to elaborate on specific words using clauses, rendering unit shifts indispensable in such contexts. For example, the source text employs the four-character idioms “眼花缭乱” and “流连忘返” to vividly depict the enchanting dance of fairies, thereby setting the stage for subsequent narrative developments. The utilization of these idioms imbues the source text with a rhythmic and memorable quality.

In the translation process, achieving syntactic balance frequently necessitates unit shifts. Rather than adhering rigidly to the form of the source text, the translator exercises flexibility. Specifically, instead of translating the idiom “流连忘返” into its direct English counterpart based on its original form, the translator opts to shift it into an attributive clause, thereby enhancing the logical coherence of the translated text.

4. Conclusion

Translation is not just a profession, but also a form of learning. Through engaging in translation practice, translators discover a sense of connection between Catford's theory of translation shifts and the translation of informative texts. This implies that translation shifts can serve as a guiding framework throughout the entire translation process. Analyzing the source text is fundamental in

translation. A precise comprehension of the contextual knowledge and main content of the source text can significantly enhance translation efficiency. With the aid of Catford's translation shift theory, the author has translated excerpts from the book *Biography of Silk Celebrities* and has derived valuable insights that can be applied to future translations of Chinese culture-oriented texts.

4.1 Major Findings

This translation practice report is grounded in the Catford's Shift Theory, examining translation methods for informational texts using *Biography of Silk Celebrities* as a case study. In the theoretical section, the translator begins by presenting an overview of the theory and delves deeper into its instructive value for handling informational texts.

Within the main body of the report, the author amalgamates the text's unique characteristics with the disparities between the Chinese and English languages. The analysis takes a granular approach, dissecting words, phrases, and sentences. Many representative examples are selected, and the phenomena of level shifts, structural shifts, class shifts, and unit shifts manifest during translation are scrutinized through the lens of Catford's Shifts Theory.

Through the examination of these illustrative examples, it becomes evident that the Catford's Shift Theory empowers the author to initiate translations from the micro-level of sentences and beyond. This approach facilitates the precise conveyance of source language information, while not being behold to the source language's form. Moreover, it factors in the readability of the translated versions of informational texts, thus underscoring the theory's practical significance.

4.2 Inadequacy and Implications

Limited by this chosen source text and the length of the report, not all the translation shifts are applied. Due to the subjectivity of the author, the translation of the source text and the content of the report might be imperfect. In addition, the author does not have too much translation practice, so the quality and skill of the translation and report writing could also be restricted. From the professional of the source text, the author lacks of the relative knowledge and common sense of the Chinese silk culture. All the above factors make the research and example analysis not deeper. Therefore, in the

following days, the author will strengthen and consolidate the learning of translation theory. More importantly, the author will enrich the translation practice to accumulate some useful experience to improve the academic ability and practical competence and hope to make contribution to the development of translation.

Besides the author's limitation, Catford's Translation Shifts Theory also has its own restriction. It only analyzes the source text from the micro point of view (such as word and sentence), but not from the macro point of view (such as from the textual level or its content and style), causing the results that the translation analysis cannot be carried out more comprehensively.

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