An Investigation on English Translations of Culture-Loaded Words in *The Analects of Confucius* from the Eco Perspective: A Case Study of the English Translation of *Lectures on China’s Traditional Political Thoughts*

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Received: May 20, 2022     Accepted: July 4, 2022     Online Published: July 10, 2022
doi:10.5539/ells.v12n3p7       URL: https://doi.org/10.5539/ells.v12n3p7

Abstract

*The Analects of Confucius* are classic works of ancient Chinese Confucian school, which contains a lot of culture-loaded words. And James Legge, Gu Hongming and Arthur Walley’s English translation of Analects is widely spread and highly recognized. Therefore, this paper will take *Lectures on China’s Traditional Political Thoughts* as an example to study the translation of culture-loaded words in three translated versions of *The Analects of Confucius* from the eco perspective. Relying on the Chinese ideological and cultural terminology Library under the project of “Chinese ideological and cultural terminology communication project”, this paper mainly combs and sums up the culture-loaded words in *The Analects of Confucius* respectively translated by James Legge, Gu Hongming, Arthur Waley. Based on the perspective of eco translatology, this paper makes a comparative study on translation methods of different schools from the perspectives of language, culture and communication, so as to improve the academic preciseness and accuracy of the translation.

Keywords: ecological translatology, *The Analects of Confucius*, culture-loaded words

1. Introduction

1.1 Confucius and The Analects of Confucius

Confucius (551 B.C.–479 B.C.), lived in the state of Lu, is an ancient Chinese thinker, educator and founder of Confucianism.

Confucius was one of the greatest scholars in the society. His thoughts had a profound impact on China and the world. He was listed as the first of the top ten cultural celebrities in the world. He once led some of his disciples to travel around the world for 14 years, and revised the six classics in his later years (*The Book of Odes, The Book of History, The Book of Rites, The Book of Music, The Book of Change, The Spring and Autumn Annals*). After his death, his disciples recorded the words, deeds, quotations and thoughts of Confucius and compiled them into *The Analects of Confucius*, which is a classic work of the Confucian school. It records the words and deeds of Confucius and his disciples in quotation and dialogue style, and reflects Confucius’ political ideas, ethical thoughts, moral concepts and educational principles. As a Confucian classic, is of great importance not only in upholding the supremacy of imperial power, emphasizing the superiority and inferiority, adjusting social relations, but also in daily life, in following and maintaining ethics, and restraining behavior.

Confucius lived in Lu state, where it had a deep tradition of patriarchal system in the Western Zhou Dynasty. At that time, the ruling power of the Zhou Dynasty was dead in fact. There were constant wars among the vassals. The intensification of social contradictions hindered the development of productive forces, and the spirit and belief of human beings were also destroyed unprecedentedly. All these constitute the historical origin and social conditions of Confucius’ political thought. “Ren” and “Li” are the basic spirit of his political thought. Chinese cultural identity also formed in this period. People began to think about things like heaven, life and the world. The culture and education previously enjoyed by the aristocrats began to move towards the common class. Confucius is one of the spiritual pioneers of this era. Some scholars believe that Confucius established “Yi-ology” and advocated the idea that human nature is essentially kind.
1.2 A Brief History of the English Translations of The Analects of Confucius

The English translation of *The Analects of Confucius* began in 1809, and there have been 29 complete versions in over 200 years. This part attempts to give a brief introduction to these translations and has a general understanding on the transmission of *The Analects of Confucius* in English-speaking countries.

1.2.1 The English Translation Versions of *The Analects of Confucius* from Missionaries

Missionary Joshua Marshman was the first person to translate *The Analects* into English. His selected translation was published in Serampore, India in 1809. The translation consists of four parts: the original text, the translation, the text interpretation and the annotation which mainly refers to *The Analects of Confucius variorum* written by Zhuxi.

In 1828, *The Four Books* translated by David Collie, a London Missionary, was published in Malacca, and the first full English translation of *The Analects of Confucius* came out.

In 1861, James Legge, a missionary of the London church, published the first volume of Chinese classics, including the translation of *The Analects of Confucius*, which is a Chinese-English version. He adopted the strategy of literal translation as far as possible. His translation and publication of Confucian classics make the best of it to promote the missionary work. It’s evaluated in *Chinese translation dictionary*: “James Legge’s translation is basically correct in understanding the original, rigorous and delicate in writing, concise and elegant” (Lin, 1997, pp. 12–13).

William Edward Soothill’s translation was published in 1910. The translator who is a missionary of the Kaiwo society of England, taught in China for many years. In 1920, he worked as a professor of Sinology at Oxford University. This translation is the most thorough version so far with a total of more than 1000 pages. In addition to the translation and notes, there are also the translation references of James Legge and Gu Hongming, which are integrated into one to facilitate readers’ comparative reading.

1.2.2 The English Translation Versions of *The Analects of Confucius* from Sinologists

Thomas Francis Wade’s English translation appeared in 1869 as a monolingual version. He has been a diplomat in China for 43 years and wrote *The Hsin Ching Lu*. However, his translation has been rarely mentioned in China. In 1895, a single translation of *The Analects of Confucius* by William Jennings, came off the press.

The English translation of *The Analects of Confucius* by Leonard Arthur Lyall, a British Sinologist, was published by Longmans, green and Co. in 1909.

The monolingual version of Arthur Waley was published by George Allen & Unwin, Ltd. in 1938. Arthur Waley is an English translator and sinologist who enjoys high reputation. He also translated *Tao Te Ching* and *Journey to the West*. There are notes at the end of the translation to further discuss the more in-depth text problems. The appendix introduces the history of the annotations of *The Analects of Confucius*. The translation of Waley’s is a universal translation in the English-speaking world, and is also well received in mainland China.

Pound first came into contact with *The Analects of Confucius* when he read the French translation of the four books by Eugène Edine Pottier in the late 1910s. The single edition translation of *The Analects of Confucius* came out in 1945. The purpose of Pound’s translation is to spread his Confucianism to the western society in order to save the social crisis. Pound’s translation is characterized by word analysis.

Associate professor of Harvard University James Ware’s English version published by the new American Library of world literature, Inc. in 1955. It is geared to the need of ordinary readers.

Raymond Dawson’s translation, published by Oxford University Press in 1993, is intended for ordinary foreign readers who have never been exposed to Chinese philosophical traditions. The language with an explanation attached is easy and natural.


When it comes to the year of 2003, Edward Slingerland’s version published in the US. Compared with the previous versions, the greatest feature of Dr. Slingerland’s version is that he has a wide range of annotations, which furnishes readers with abundant background knowledge.
1.2.3 The English Translation Versions of *The Analects of Confucius* from Chinese Translators at Home and Abroad

In 1898, Gu Hongming’s translation of *The Analects of Confucius* was published in Shanghai. Gu’s translation of Confucian classics is to spread Confucian culture to Westerners, correct the misunderstanding caused by James Legge and others, and he insists that China also has a higher civilization that should not be humiliate recklessly. The bilingual translation of Li Tianchen was published by Shandong University Press in 1991, with a Chinese translation attached.

Professor Mei Renyi’s translation was published by China Peace Publishing House in 1992. It is a bilingual version with modern Chinese translation by Mr. Zhou Duwen.

Wang Fulin’s bilingual edition was published by Shanghai World Book Publishing Company in 1997. In the preface, the translator points out his translation is to carry forward the traditional culture of our Chinese nation. (Wang, 1997: 7) For the sake of the objective, there are detailed explanatory notes in the translation, which not only translates the original into modern Chinese, but also translates the source text into plain English, and also leave brief comments on chapters.

Li Xiangfu’s bilingual translation was published by Premier Publishing Company in 1999. His translation of *The Analects of Confucius* is to distinguish and correct the mistranslations which began by autobiographical clergies.

The bilingual translation of Professor Xu Yuanchong from Peking University was published in 2005. His translation is bold and unconstrained with novelty, putting forward new ideas on the translation of some key words.

To sum up, among the above translations, there are 17 foreign scholars’ translations represented by James Legge, David Collie and Arthur Waley. Most of them are written by western missionaries and sinologists. To some extent, this conveys that *The Analects of Confucius* has had a certain influence in cross-country communication. In domestic part, since the publication of Mr. Gu Hongming’s version, many excellent translations have emerged. In general, the research on the translation of *The Analects of Confucius* is on the rise, which provides an important reference value for the spread of Chinese culture.

1.3 Research Significance

The significance of the study is as follows:

First, theoretically speaking, this thesis has a discussion on the translation of culture-loaded words in *The Analects of Confucius* from the perspective of eco translatology. *The Analects of Confucius* is considered as one of the most representative masterpieces of Confucianism while previous studies on the English translation always remained at the traditional perspective. A comparative research is made in this paper from the new perspective of eco translatology, trying to provide more possibilities for the future English researches from the perspective of eco translatology and the translation practice in culture-loaded words of Confucianism.

Second, in a practical sense, *The Analects of Confucius* is one of the representative works of Chinese traditional mainstream thought, which contains extremely rich Confucian cultural connotation. Social culture contains all aspects of human life, such as ethics, social customs, etc. Culture-loaded words are seen as the core part to understand Confucian cultural connotation. The analysis of the social culture-loaded words in *The Analects of Confucius* can provide an opportunity for the readers of the target language to understand the abstract and obscure core cultural concepts in Confucianism. By doing that, foreign scholars and readers will have a complete and comprehensive understanding of China’s mainstream ideology.

Meanwhile, James Legge’s, Gu Hongming’s and Arthur Waley’s English translation are the most representative version of *The Analects of Confucius* which have been accepting praises from scholars and readers from all over the world. Under the implementation of the “go out” cultural strategy, the study is conducive to promoting Chinese culture overseas.

1.4 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is composed of four chapters.

In the first chapter, the basic information about Confucius and the history of the translation of *The Analects of Confucius* are briefly introduced.

The second chapter is theoretical background. After reviewing the domestic and international studies on eco translatology, the paper makes an attempt to summarize and explore the definition and the characteristics of eco translatology. Moreover, the chapter makes an investigation on the previous studies of eco translatology at home
and abroad to draw the research conclusion of the topic so as to provide a theoretical basis for the research.

The third chapter focuses on a comparative study of the translation of culture-loaded words in James Legge’s, Gu Hongming’s and Arthur Waley’s English versions of *The Analects of Confucius*. Based on the classic classification proposed by Nida, a prestigious translator, social culture-loaded words are discussed in the paper, as well as the reasons are explored in order to explore the appropriate translations.

The last chapter draws the conclusion about the major findings and gives suggestions about proper translation of social culture-loaded words in *The Analects of Confucius* for further academic study on this topic.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Definition of Eco Translatology

Professor Hu Gengshen points out that translation is as textual transplants. Eco translation studies regard translation activities as a community of translation ecology, which is composed of translation, translator and translation context. The research object is the translator’s existence, text vitality and translation ecology and their interaction. It establishes a holistic thinking mode based on “survival, life and ecology”, and establishes the translator-centered thought, translator responsibility and translator development dialectically and integration from the translator’s living conditions.

The source text and the target text can be regarded as a closely connected ecological community, and the translator, as an “ecological man”, needs to take the ecological responsibility of translation, be aware of the various relationships between the translator and the source text, the target text and the ecological context of translation, and be able to handle, coordinate and solve various relationships to achieve a harmonious balance of translation ecology.

By investigating and summarizing the concept of eco translatology defined by scholars, The author finds out that eco translatology makes a progress that scholars made from the text perspective to the translator’s perspective. The translator is in the center position and namely translator-oriented. He should not only adapt to the translation ecological environment, but also choose the translation. The theory mentioned that translation is the selection that translators need to adapt to the translation environment.

To sum up, eco translatology is an interdisciplinary study, which makes an analogy between translation ecology and natural eco system, and makes a new description and explanation of the nature, process, standard, principle and method of translation as well as translation phenomena from the perspective of translators.

2.2 Three Dimensions of Eco Translatology

According to the principle of multi-dimensional adaptation and adaptive selection, Professor Hu Gengshen stressed that the ecological translation method focuses on three-dimensional transformation, which can be divided into three dimensions: language dimension, culture dimension and communicative dimension. The thesis is mainly guided by the three dimensions.

2.2.1 The Transformation of Language Dimension

The adaptive choice transformation of language dimension refers to the transformation of language form and structure in translation practice, so as to adapt to the language ecological environment of the target language. Chinese and English belong to different language families, and there are great differences between them. Chinese emphasizes parataxis and has relatively loose sentence structure; English emphasizes hypotaxis and logical cohesion. In the process of Chinese-English bilingual conversion, translators need to clarify the logical relationship of sentences, supplement the implied meaning of Chinese words in English, and choose authentic sentences and structures to adapt to the aesthetic feeling of English readers.

2.2.2 The Transformation of Culture Dimension

In addition to the transformation of language, translation also includes the transmission of cultural values. The basic task of the translator is to transform the characteristic cultural information in the source language into the information that can be understood and accepted by the target language readers. The translators are required to convey the rich Chinese cultural connotation behind the specific words during English translation of culture loaded words in the Analects of Confucius, so that the readers of English-speaking countries can fully feel it and successfully realize the unity of spreading Confucian culture and giving the readers aesthetic feeling.

2.2.3 The Transformation of Communicative Dimension

On the other hand, translation focuses on the transmission of information and the realization of communicative intention. However, the translation of culture-loaded words in *The Analects of Confucius* should not only achieve
communicative intention, but also endow the readers with aesthetic feeling. Only with communicative intention as the main part and aesthetic feeling as the auxiliary part, can the communicative purpose of external communication be realized. In order to make the best communicative effect, the translator should transform the translation properly from the perspective of communicative dimension and context.

2.3 A Survey on the Previous Studies of Eco Translatology

The meaning of ecology has been expanding and has jumped out of the field of biology and penetrated into the field of humanity and social science. In this context, eco translatology emerges as the times require. After thorough theoretical researches and practices, Professor Hu first put forward the ecological translation theory in 2001. This theory follows the Western holism and emphasizes the biological ideas of “natural selection” and “survival of the fittest”. Based on the ecological wisdom, he defines translation as the translator’s selection activity to adapt to the translation ecological environment (Hu, 2010, pp. 65–67).

Professor Zhang Jian published a study on the communicative effect of external publicity from the perspective of eco translatology, in which he proposed that external publicity from the perspective of eco translatology should gain the reader’s recognition by solving difficulties and doubts, or making reasonable adaptations, so as to achieve the ideal communicative effect and achieve a benign and balanced eco translation environment. Based on the study of retranslation motivation of eco translatology, Professor Tian Chuanmao points out that retranslation should be chosen to adapt to the changes of translation ecological environment, text ecology, translation community (Tian, 2020, pp. 57–61).

In November 2010, the first International Symposium on Eco translatology was held in Macao. 56 experts and scholars from all over the world attended the conference and spoke highly of the establishment and development of eco translatology.

The consultant of the international society for Eco translatology and former editor of Prospective: Studies in translatology, Cay Dollerup, points out that eco translation is the first translation theory with real original meaning outside the European context (Jiang, 2011, pp. 5–9).

3. Comparative Analysis of the English Translations of Social Culture-Loaded Words in The Analects of Confucius from Eco Perspective

Social culture-loaded words mirror the language habits of a nation and society, including political characteristics, ethics and appellation. This chapter will focus on the translation of social culture-loaded words in The Analects of Confucius.

3.1 A Comparative Study of the Translations of “Ren”

“Ren”, as the core of Confucius’ thought, goes through ancient Chinese history and modern society with profound and complex connotation. It can be considered as the most frequent social culture-loaded word in The Analects of Confucius. “Ren” including loyalty, respect, tolerance, trust and other traditional Chinese moral concepts, can be seen in various Confucian theories, such as “Ren Zheng” and “Ren Zhe Ai Ren”.

According to Lectures on China’s Traditional Political Thoughts, “仁” appears seven times in the book. The specific sources are as follows:

Table 1. Translations of “仁” by different translators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Translator</th>
<th>English Translation of “仁”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>James Legge</td>
<td>perfect virtue; benevolent actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gu Hongming</td>
<td>moral life; morality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arthur Waley</td>
<td>Goodness; good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example 1

SL: “子罕言利，与命，与仁。” (《论语·子罕》) (Xu Datong, 2015, pp. 66, 83)

TL1: The subjects of which the Master seldom spoke were—profitableness, and also the appointments of Heaven, and perfect virtue. (Confucian Analects, VII) (James, 2016, p. 283).

TL2: Confucius in his conversation seldom spoke of interests, of religion or of morality. (The Discourse and Sayings of Confucius, VII) (Gu, 2017, p. 181).

TL3: The Master seldom spoke of profit or fate or Goodness. (The Discourse and Sayings of Confucius, VII)
Example 2


TL1: The Master said: “Let the will be set on the path of duty.” “Let every attainment in what is good be firmly grasped.” “Let perfect virtue be accorded with.” “Let relaxation and enjoyment be found in the polite arts.” (Confucian Analects, VII) (James, 2016, p. 212).

TL2: Confucius said to his disciple: “Seek for wisdom; hold fast to godliness; live a moral life; and enjoy the pleasures derived from the pursuit of the polite arts.” (The Discourse and Sayings of Confucius, VII) (Gu, 2017, p. 134).


Example 3

SL: “孝悌也者，其为仁之本与!” (《论语·学而》) (Xu, 2015, p. 28).

TL1: Filial piety and fraternal submission—are they not the root of all benevolent Actions, (Confucian Analects, I) (James, 2016, p. 7).

TL2: Now, to be a good son and a good citizen—do not these form the foundation of a moral life, (The Discourses and Sayings of Confucius, I) (Gu, 2017, p. 10).


Example 4

SL: 仁者爱人 (《论语·子路》) (Xu, 2015, p. 70).

TL1: A benevolent ruler loves all men. (Confucian Analects, XII) (James, 2016, p. 428).


Example 5

SL: 颜回问仁，子曰: 克己复礼。 (《论语·颜渊》) (Xu, 2015, p. 73).

TL1: Yen Yuen asked about perfect virtue. The Master said, “To subdue one’s self and return to propriety, is perfect virtue.” (Confucian Analects, XII) (James, 2016, p. 395).


Confucius never frequently talks about fame and wealth, but believes in fate and praises “仁”，which refers to good nature and fragrant moral character. As a wise man who pursues spiritual prosperity, he thinks that pursuing interests is the most instinctive and strongest desire of mankind, and it’s the root of all disputes and sufferings in the world. Therefore, he has a clear understanding of the harm of interests. “仁” means essentially the caring for the public, and it then builds a virtuous interpersonal relationship. It can only arouse people’s greed by always putting the pursuit of interests and seeking wealth on the lips. To some extent, it is not conducive to social stability and harmony to mention wealth with no limitation.

James Legge translates “仁” as “perfect virtual”/“benevolent actions”, meaning good character. From the perspective of language, this translation conveys a clear meaning and avoids the divergence caused by the problem of language expression. In the dimension of cultural communication, the communicative intention of political thought and ethics advocated by Confucius is to educate and influence people, and achieve social harmony, national stability and people’s happiness. “仁” appears more than 100 times in the 20 chapters of The Analects of Confucius. Due to different communicative intentions and different contexts, “仁” has different meanings. Foreign readers don’t quite understand the specific meaning of quality in Chinese, and “virtue” means fine quality, which well explains the meaning of “仁” here, so that foreign readers can clearly understand the
connotation. Similarly, Gu Hongming’s version is also in line with the original text, which shows its core meaning, and conforms to the value concept of target language readers, and achieves the purpose of cross-cultural communication.

3.2 The Comparative Study of the Translation of “君子”

“君子” means knowledgeable, intelligent or a man with good moral character. In Confucius’ view, erudition is a very important standard. “君子” appears 107 times in the full text of The Analects of Confucius, which is the second most frequent used in the book.

According to Lectures on China’s Traditional Political Thoughts, “君子” appears four times in the book. The specific sources are as follows:

Table 2. Translations of “君子” by different translators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Translator</th>
<th>English Translation of “君子”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>James Legge</td>
<td>The superior man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gu Hongming</td>
<td>wise man; wise and good man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arthur Waley</td>
<td>True gentleman; gentleman</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example 6
SL: 君子和而不同。 (《论语·子路》) (Xu, 2015, p. 69).
TL1: The superior man is affable, but nor adulatory. (Confucian Analects, IV) (James, 2016, p. 471).
TL2: A wise man is sociable, but not familiar. (The Discourses and Sayings of Confucius, IV) (Gu, 2017, p. 75).

Example 7
SL: 君子喻于义, 小人喻于利。 (《论语·里仁》) (Xu, 2015, p. 66).
TL1: The superior man thinks of the sanctions of law; the small man thinks of favors which he may receive. (Confucian Analects, IV) (James, 2016, p. 116).
TL2: A wise man expects justice; a fool, only expects favors. (Confucian Analects, IV) (Gu, 2017, p. 75).

Example 8
SL: 君子务本, 本立而道生。 (《论语·学而》) (Xu, 2015, p. 68).
TL1: The superior man bends his attention to what is radical. That being established, all practical courses naturally grow up. (Confucian Analects, I) (James, 2016, p. 7).
TL2: A wise man devotes his attention to what is essential in the foundation of life. When the foundation is laid, wisdom will come. (The Discourses and Sayings of Confucius, I) (Gu, 2017, p. 10).
TL3: And as for such men starting a revolution, no instance of it has ever occurred. It is upon the trunk that a gentleman works. When that is firmly set up, the Way grows. (The Analects, I) (Arthur, 2008, p. 3).

Example 9
SL: “君子谋道不谋食” (《论语·卫灵公》) (Xu, 2015, p. 13).
TL1: The Master said, “The object of the superior man is truth. Food is not his object.” (Confucian Analects, XV) (James, 2016, p. 570).

James Legge translated “君子” as “the superior man”, emphasizing his noble status and moral character. While
Waley translates “君子” into “true gentleman”/“gentleman”, which lays emphasis on virtuous moral spirit. According to his understanding, “君子” refers to “descendants of the ruling house in any state”, and he also points out that “the gentleman is bound by special code of morals and manners”. But in Confucianism, “君子” does not only come from the upper class, but more refers to the noble spirit and conduct.

Gu Hongming regards “gentleman” as a person full of wisdom. He claims that a person’s wisdom is not only reflected in intelligence, but also in the cultivation of moral character. Therefore, he translated “wise man”/“wise and good man” which is in line with the connotation of Confucianism in terms of language and culture. It is also convenient for foreign readers to understand and meet the requirements of cross-cultural communication.

3.3 The Comparative Study of the Translation of “命”

“命” is another important core word in traditional Chinese culture. It runs through various academic schools, which means the will of heaven, and the destiny of people is under the control of heaven. According to Lectures on China’s Traditional Political Thoughts, “命” appears three times in the book. The specific sources are as follows:

Example 10

SL: 子罕言利，与命，与仁。 (《论语·子罕》) (Xu, 2015, p. 66).

TL1: The subjects of which the Master seldom spoke were—profitableness, and also the appointments of Heaven, and perfect virtue. (Confucian Analects, IX) (James, 2016, p. 283).

TL2: Confucius in his conversation seldom spoke of interests, of religion or of morality. (The Discourses and Sayings of Confucius, IX) (Gu, 2017, p. 181).


Example 11

SL: 死生有命，富贵在天。 (《论语·颜渊》) (Xu, 2015, p. 67).

TL1: Death and life have their determined appointment; riches and honors depend upon Heaven. (Confucian Analects, XII) (James, 2016, p. 405).

TL2: Life and Death are preordained, and riches and honors come from God. (The Discourses and Sayings of Confucius, XII) (Gu, 2017, p. 250).

TL3: Death and life are the decree of Heaven; wealth and rank depend upon the will of Heaven. (The Analects, VII) (Arthur, 2008, p. 127).

From the perspective of language, the three scholars understood “命” as a predestined arrangement, and the translation “the appointments of Heaven”/“determined appointment”, “religion”/“preordained” and “fate”/“the decree of Heaven” are synonyms with various expressions. It includes the translation of nouns and adjectives, which fully fits the English expression habits.

While from the perspective of communication, Waley connected the core concept of “命” with religion and translated it into “the guide of heaven”, which is consistent with the ideas of other religious schools in foreign countries. It is convenient for readers to associate with their own culture and realize the purpose of cross-cultural communication.

4. Conclusion

In this chapter, it makes conclusions on former chapters, containing the major findings of the study, limitations and suggestions. The paper makes a study among James Legge’s, Gu Hongming’s and Arthur Waley’s English translated version through eco-translatology to find appropriate translation strategies of culture-loaded words translation in Chinese classics.
4.1 Major Findings
As one of the most basic classics for Chinese and foreign scholars to understand Confucianism and Chinese traditional culture, the process of translation, dissemination and acceptance of The Analects of Confucius in western countries is a microcosm of the spread of Chinese culture in the western world. Looking back on the translation process of classics, we can clearly see the relationship between the translator’s translation motivation and the final form of the translation.

By analyzing the three translators’ versions from the eco perspective and practicing the principle of multi-dimensional adaptation and selection, the diversity of the translations of culture-loaded words can be seen. First of all, different translators have different understandings of the text, resulting in different translations, such as the word “君子”. The three translators respectively translate it as “the superior man”, “wish man”/ “wish and good man” and “true gentleman”/ “gentleman”. In the process of translation, it focuses on the meaning and spirit of gentleman in the original text, instead of the language structure of the original text. Secondly, the same translator has different translation methods and translations according to the original meaning. Many cultural loads express different meanings in different contexts. Based on the principle of adaptive selection from the perspective of eco translatology, this paper selected the appropriate translations from the source language and the target language. Moreover, in order to meet the needs of authentic English expression in the target language, the part of speech of each translation will be different. For example, in Gu Hongming’s translation, “命” is translated as noun and adjective.

In dealing with culture-loaded words, it’s necessary to preserve the style and features of the source language, mainly by means of literal translation and relevance. On the basis of the royalty to the original text, taking into account both the source culture and the target culture, it’s better to make adaptive selection from the linguistic and cultural dimension, the communicative dimension considering the communicative intention of the original language.

4.2 Research Limitations and Suggestions
In the thesis, perspective of multi-dimensional analysis in eco-translatology is insufficient. More dimensions should be discussed to survey the adaptation and selection.

Moreover, there are some personal limitations. Due to the author’s own insufficient theoretical knowledge reserve and inadequate time, the studies of this paper are limited and few examples may not be adequately analyzed.

Despite all of these, there still are some enlightenments that can be given to the researchers. According to the theory of eco translatology and ecological environment, the English translation of Chinese classics needs to adapt to local conditions, follow the principle of “adaptive choice”, find out the most appropriate Chinese and English translation that can both fit in the two languages, and achieve win-win situation.

Acknowledgements
Funding: The paper was funded by “Chinese Fund for the Humanities and Social Sciences”, entitled “Lectures on China’s Traditional Political Thoughts” (English version) (Grant Number: 20WZZB004).

References


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