

# On Zhang Peiji's Prose Translation from the Perspective of the Translator's Subjectivity

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## Abstract

Chinese prose characterizes being formally-loose and essence-focused with features such as many a free style and myriads of assorted contents, among which the poetic images and artistic conceptions are so distinct that they are usually regarded as criteria for measuring its excellence. Whereas, it is the same features that impose obstacles for the prose translation, for it is difficult for the translator to grasp the whole essence of the original text in the first place and then recreate it in the translation works in another language. Therefore, during the translating process, it is inevitable not to adopt the translators' subjectivity. And the three basic characteristics of it, namely, activeness, passiveness and purposiveness, will combine to affect the whole translating activity in one way or another. Nowadays, translation theorists both at home and abroad have conducted many studies on translators' subjectivity. Grounded on those authoritative theories, this paper will make a tentative study on Zhang Peiji's translation of Chinese modern prose writings. Professor Zhang's classics Selected Modern Chinese Prose Writings will be focused. In the main body of the paper, the demonstrations of those three features of subjectivity will be elaborated with abundant examples from the two volumes of his translation works. In particular, great attention will be paid to the function of the translator's activeness in the translation, which will be analyzed via three levels: lexical, semantic and textual. Thus, readers and translators-to-be would be better able to appreciate and draw upon those excellent translated prose.

**Keywords:** prose translation, translators' subjectivity, activeness, passiveness, purposiveness

## 1. Introduction

Since ancient time, China boasts plenty of profound prose. And the Chinese modern prose writings refer to those written in vernacular Chinese after the May 4th Movement. Abundant as they are, translations of the prose have always been scarce, lagging behind renderings on other types of literature, probably due to the feature of prose, namely, "formally-loose and essence-focused". Various forms, substantial contents and the differences between Chinese and English prose all contribute to the difficulties of translating Chinese prose into English. However, Professor Zhang Peiji has always made such great efforts in rendering Chinese modern prose writings into English that his years-born fruit Selected Modern Chinese Prose Writings has been worshipped in the translation circle as a landmark in the prose translation.

As to the studies on prose rendering, progress has been made as well. Recently, there are a growing number of scholars who have started to conduct research and make analysis on the prose translation from different vantage points, such as aesthetics, rhetorics, reproducing style, recreating the artistic conception, translators' subjectivity, etc. Researchers are intended to blaze a new trail to appreciate and appraise those translation works, exploring to develop the best possible translation theory on prose writings. Yet those theories are not systematic with a predominant school. Analyses and studies are still in the rudimentary phase with great potential and large room to develop.

Focusing on translators' subjectivity, one perspective mentioned above, scholars and translators both at home and abroad have made studies on the three basic constituting elements of it, that is, activeness, passiveness and purposiveness, on the solid ground of various influential schools, such as polysystem theories, manipulation school, hermeneutics, deconstructive theories and so on. Each individual theory mentioned above is, by itself, inclusive of elaborate and evolving theory, which distinguishes itself from one another. Yet they overlap with each other in the studies of translators' subjectivity, though from different viewpoints and with distinct

emphases.

It is well-grounded to study the prose translation from the perspective of translators' subjectivity. As mentioned above, the prose characterizes "being formally-loose and essence-focused", which results in the obstacles of its translation. However, it is the same feature that provides a platform for translators to function subjectively, without which it is scarcely possible for the translator to recreate the aesthetic and artistic conception of the original in the translation edition. Thus, it is almost inevitable not to apply subjectivity.

In terms of the prose writings, the objects under studies, the book *Selected Modern Chinese Prose Writings* will be focused. It is an anthology, which is inclusive of ninety-seven items of elegant Chinese modern prose writings, altogether with their English version translated by Zhang Peiji. This collection is a landmark in the prose translation and is worshipped as classics in the pantheon of translation. Therefore, studies on such an issue make sense and will provide readers, translation critics and translators with a brand-new aspect to appreciate prose translation and draw upon those excellent editions.

## **2. Researches on Translators' Subjectivity**

As mentioned in the introduction, since the cultural turn in the 70s of the 20th century, translation theorists have shifted their focus from linguistics to culture. The translator, subject of the translating activities, has gradually won his due attention. And studies on the role of translators as well as the function of their subjectivity in the translating process have begun to flourish. Those influential translation theories, such as the polysystem theory and manipulation school, have integrated researches on translators' subjectivity into their massive system respectively. At the same time, studies on it also appear in some budding theories and will continue in the course of development to a complete system. In the following, the studies on translators' subjectivity will be revealed from perspectives of different schools respectively in a chronological way.

### *2.1 The Cultural Turn in the Translation Circle*

In 1976, the academic conference on translation held in Leuven Belgium marked the beginning of translatology as an independent discipline. Prior to that, translation study had been regarded as a sub-branch of linguistics and those translation theories had been dominated by linguistic concepts as well. Most researchers, led by Roman Jakobson, Eugene Nida and Newmark, attempted to develop theories from the perspectives of linguistics, such as pragmatics, semantics, and semiotics and so on. These translation theories provide systems to analyze the involved languages themselves, but prove inefficient when issues like history and culture are concerned.

Then translators, led by Even Zohar, an Israeli literary theorist, first put forward the polysystem theory, which made a breakthrough to integrate culture into translation theories. The polysystem theory breaks through the bottleneck of translation doctrines, which are confined in the scope of linguistics, and ushers translation into a wider spectrum. It is the recommencement of cultural turn.

### *2.2 Polysystem Theories and Translators' Subjectivity*

Polysystem, first proposed by Even Zohar in his works *Papers on Historical Poetics*, refers to the synthesis of various literary systems from poetry to popular fiction in a given culture. This theory mainly holds that all the codes to influence man's communication, such as language, literature, economy, political ideology etc., are a system rather than mixing irrelevant elements.

The linking point between polysystem theory and translatology is the translation version. Through studies on the translated edition, it provides a feasible way to reconsider issues like the proper translator, suitable metaword on translation edition, translating adequacy and so on. Meanwhile, to conduct research on translation as an element of a large system encompassing culture, society, ideology etc., is, in effect, studying the translators' passiveness. Despite the neglect on activeness and purposiveness, this theory ushers in the cultural shift and paves the way for the appearance of Manipulation School.

### *2.3 Manipulation School and Translators' Subjectivity*

Translation theorist Theo Hermans is the first to term "manipulate" in the translation studies. He points out that, viewed from the objective literature, all translation is, to some extent, to manipulate the original text for a given purpose, a statement forming the early theory of Manipulation School. Afterward, in the classics *Translation, Rewriting and Manipulation of Literary Fame*, Andre Lefevere and Susan Bassnetta say "translating is undoubtedly rewriting the original texts". This represents the formation of Manipulation School.

These two theorists propose that translation is subject to internal and external factors. The internal factor lies in the translators, who would adjust their translations to fit into the ideology and poetics at a given age and in a given district; while the external factor refers to the patronage, which constitutes three elements, namely,

ideology, economy and social status. The factors altogether are actually discussion about translators' passiveness and purposiveness.

#### *2.4 Hermeneutics and Translators' Subjectivity*

Hermeneutics, coming into being firstly in the western world, was to interpret Bible and other classical works. Then it developed into philosophic hermeneutics and then into Onto-Hermeneutics. The theories of hermeneutics have cast great effect on progress of translation studies since western theorists turned their eyes onto cultural phenomena rather than on linguistic level. It has introduced perspectives of time and history into translation. The latest theory is developed by Hans-Georg Gadamer, who mainly centers on studies of understanding, meaning and relationship between readers and texts. Since in the process of translation, the translator should play the role of a reader in the first place and then can translate. Such a sequence forms a firm tie between Hermeneutics and translation. At present, Hermeneutics mainly studies the necessity and restriction of translators' subjectivity from two aspects: translators in the historical process and translators' personal viewpoints.

#### *2.5 The Latest Studies on Translators' Subjectivity*

In the translation circle, there has long existed the dispute about domestication and foreignization. From the viewpoint of modern translation theory, it is a discussion on the transparency of the translated works, that is, the issue about translators' invisibility.

Eugene Nida, a renowned linguist, demonstrates his favor for domestication in many of his translation works as well as works of his own; while in China, "likeness in spirit" by Fu Lei and "sublimation" by Qian Zhongshu show the tendency to domestication as well. However, nowadays, a growing number of translation theorists, led by the Italian-American scholar Laurence Venuti, have begun to challenge the domesticating strategy, which is for transparency and fluency. Venuti regards the domestication strategy as a cultural and linguistic hegemony imposed on weak nations by those strong ones. Obviously, to resist such hegemony on the source language by the target language, one has to be opposed to the domestication or the translators' invisibility in translation. In other words, to object to translators' invisibility is to be for translators' creativity and initiative, or activeness.

In addition to Venuti's rational analysis, Douglas Robinson, an American translation theorist, has pushed forward Venuti's theory in a critical way. In his book *Who Translates?—Translators' Subjectivity beyond Reason*, Robinson has "developed a post-rationalist translator subjectivity across a fairly wide disciplinary spectrum, including church history, psychoanalysis, philosophy, literature, neurology and economics. It discusses the translator's inner states and the outer collective functions that influence the translation process."

### **3. Translators' Subjectivity in Selected Modern Chinese Prose Writings**

Dating back to ancient Greece, the people-oriented ideology has already existed in embryo, yet explicit thoughts of subjectivity and studies on it are usually accredited to the period of Renaissance. People-centered thinking has paved way for series of later thoughts, such as individualism and humanism, prevailing in the west. Despite its profound influences, there is not an ideological system exclusive to the studies of subjectivity. However, consensus has reached by philosophers and thinkers on the basic features or constituting elements of subjectivity, that is, activeness, passiveness and purposiveness.

Activeness means that man can response actively and selectively to the stimulus of inner and outer world. Passiveness means man will be subject to influences of his own times consciously or unconsciously. And purposiveness means that man conduct behaviors for a purpose.

Narrowing down to the subjectivity of translators, one can find the early research on it after the cultural turn in the 70s of the 20th century. The role of translators, which has long been ignored before that shift, is paid due attention to in the research and theories of translation. In the scope of translation, theorists begin to take translators' subjectivity into consideration when they conduct analyses and develop theories. Hence we see the formation of a distinct and specific perspective for translatology.

#### *3.1 Translators' Activeness*

In philosophy, activeness means that man can response actively and selectively to the stimulus of inner and outer world. Restricted to the field of translation, translators' activeness has been studies in more specific terms. As mentioned in the literature review, hermeneutics has introduced perspectives of time and history into translation and its latest theories are concerning understanding and meaning. In accordance with it, the process of understanding is a process of integration between viewpoint of the translator and that of the original author. Only by applying activeness can the translator step out the limited viewpoint of his own to realize that integration with the original author.

Further confined to the prose translation, the paper will underscore the application of the translator's activeness from different levels, such as dictions, adjustments of sentence pattern and recreation of the style and artistic conceptions etc.

### 3.1.1 On Lexical Level

Words are the founding bricks of the whole construction of discourse. Similarly, the translation of the whole passage starts from the rendering of words. Basic though they are, well-chosen words may bring life into the prose. In the following are exemplifications of excellent word translation generated from the translator's activeness.

#### (1) Diction

In *Transient Days* by Zhu Ziqing, there are sentences as following.

“太阳他有脚啊，轻轻悄悄地挪移了；我也茫茫然跟着旋转。于是——洗手的时候，日子从水盆里过去；吃饭的时候，日子从饭碗里过去；默默时，便从凝然的双眼前过去。我觉察他去的匆匆了，伸出手遮挽时，他又从遮挽着的手边过去，天黑时，我躺在床上，他便伶伶俐俐地从我身上跨过，从我脚边飞去了。等我睁开眼和太阳再见，这算又溜走了一日。我掩着面叹息，新来的日子的影儿又开始在叹息里闪过了。”

In the English version, those verbs, generally meaning “to go”, are rendered into accurate and appropriate phrases by professor Zhang. “挪移” is translated into “to edge away” to fully convey the implication of moving little by little very slowly. “过去” occurs four times in the mentioned sentences, yet in the translated edition they appear as different verbal phrases respectively, that is, “to flow away through the sink”, “to vanish in the rice bowl”, “to pass away before the fixed gaze” and “to brush past the out-stretched hands”. Are the four verbal phrases chosen randomly? Or are they inter-changeable? Probably not. “flow away”, which is to describe the fluid, is chosen to match “the sink”; “vanish” here is to go with the disappearance of the food “in the rice bowl”; “pass away” depicts the scenario of a day walking past in front of a person; and “brush past” generates the impression that a day moves past a person so carelessly that it lightly touches his out-stretched hands. Meanwhile, “跨过” is “to stride over the body”; “飞去” is “to flit past the feet”; and “闪过” is “to flash past”. All the three action verbs have been rendered vividly and dynamically to reproduce, in the translation works, the exact images of the original.

Another instance of professor Zhang's proficiency of diction illustrates in *Mid-Life Loneliness* by Xiao Mianzun. In the first paragraph there is a clause: “头发开始秃脱而且变白了”. “头发开始秃脱” can be translated into “my head balding”, yet Zhang renders it as “my hair thinning”, so that “hair” can well agree with “graying” in the following, thus finishing the whole sentence smoothly and succinctly.

Besides, in *Stars on a Snowy Night* by Bing Xin, there is a sentence: “连夜雨雪，一点星光都看不见.”. Professor Zhang Peiji has translated it into “it had been snowing all night, not a single star in sight.” A simple and succinct sentence sends out a superb sensation. On the one hand, “night” and “sight” are rhymes; on the other hand, “single” “star” and “sight” are the application of alliteration. The translator's creative rendering not only conveys the very meaning of an individual sentence, but also provokes readers' poetic imagination to grasp the keynote of the prose on the whole.

Still another example comes from the prose *Tribute to the White Poplar* by Mao Dun. “……绿的呢，是麦田，和风吹送，翻起一轮轮的绿波——这时你会真心佩服昔人所造的两个字‘麦浪’，若不是妙手偶得，便确是经过锤炼的语言的精华。” The clause “是麦田，……翻起一轮轮的绿波” is translated into the noun phrase of “a sea of rolling green waves”, and “麦浪” into “rippling wheat”. Both “rolling” and “rippling” succeed in conveying the sense of dynamic, and the image of the wheat rising and falling would of itself well up inside the readers.

#### (2) Repeated Phrases

Understandably, it is unavoidable to employ the same words, phrases or even sentences in a discourse. Such a linguistic phenomenon is, more often than not, handled through two methods, that is, keep it or change it. While confining discussion to lexical level, one can find that the repeated parts are mostly rendered into synonyms or expressed with diversified forms in the translation to avoid monotony. In *Selected Modern Chinese Prose Writings* are abundant instances.

In *Never Give up the Pursuit of Learning* by Hu Shi, “学问” occurs nine times, yet professor Zhang Peiji applies “study” “knowledge” “scholarship” “being erudite” as alternatives of “learning”. Also, in *Dream* by Ba Jin, there are three sentences describing the sound of rain (滴滴的雨声), yet they are of distinct forms: “the pit-a-pat of rain drops” “the drip drip drip of rain” and “the pitter-pattering of the rain”.

In addition to the diversification of word choice, the application of pronoun or adverb turns out efficient and profuse as well. For example, in *My Everlasting Dream and Pursuit* by Xiao Hong, a paragraph goes like this, “所以每每在大雪中的黄昏里, 围着暖炉, 围着祖父, 听着祖父读着诗篇, 看着祖父读着诗篇时微红的嘴唇。” Zhang’s translation is “Often of a snowy evening, we children would hang about grandpa by a heating stove, listening to him reading poems aloud and meanwhile watching his busy ruddy lips.” “围着暖炉” is rendered into “by a heating stove”, an adverbial clause to modify the verbal phrase of “hang about grandpa”. Besides, “祖父” occurs three times; and the first one is translated as “grandpa”, while the rest two are substituted as pronouns of “him” and “his”. Due to the translator’s initiative, the English sentence is tightly-knitted, without redundant words and tedious repeating.

### (3) Onomatopoeia

Among various prose writing, a considerable number of items will fall into one category, in which writers would express sentiment implicitly by depicting the surrounding scenes. Therefore, a frequently-adopted writing technique is description, which further results in the occurrence of onomatopoeia.

In terms of the translation of onomatopoeia, some Chinese imitative words have their equivalents in the English language, such as “柴火的爆裂声” with “the crackling of firewood”. However, there are also some, which is out of the category in form but in effect rendered as onomatopoeia by the translator to achieve graphic effect. Take Xiao Hong’s *My Everlasting Dream and Pursuit* as an example. “而暖炉上水壶的盖子, 则像伴奏的乐器似的振动着。” This Chinese sentence includes no onomatopoeia, but professor Zhang Peiji has rendered “振动着” into “rattling”, an onomatopoeia lively describing the short sharp sounds made by the lid repeatedly against the kettle. Also in *Enjoying the Moon* by Ye Shengtao, there is a sentence as following, “只记得某夜夜半醒来, 对窗的收音机已经沉寂, 隔壁的麻将也歇了手。” Its translation is “I remember how late one night I happened to wake up to find no more blaring of the radio from the window of the opposite house and no more clatter of next door’s mahjong tiles.” “Blaring of radio” and “clatter of mahjong tiles” not only enliven the whole sentence, but also express the author’s dislike for those loud and unpleasant noises.

### (4) Others

Other than the three items mentioned above, the translator’s creativity and activeness have displayed in many aspects, such as addition and omission of words, adjustment of the part of speech, etc. Take Ke Ling’s *Lane* as an example. In the translation of “它不是乡村的陋巷, 湫隘破败”, “破败” is omitted, since its meaning is included in “the rural alley”; “飘逸恬静”, a parallel structure in Chinese, is rendered into an endocentric phrase of “gentle gracefulness”; and “阴森和肃杀” turns out to be “gloomy sternness” in the English translation.

## 3.1.2 On Semantic Level

### (1) Parallel Structure

Be it in English or in Chinese, parallel structures boast neat sentence pattern, melodious rhythm and grand momentum. All these features combine to enable writers to express a strong feeling. But the other side of the coin is that it is difficult to keep the form and the content at once in translation. Hard as it is, professor Zhang has proven the translatability of it and provided good examples as well.

The first paragraph, “燕子去了, 有再来的时候; 杨柳枯了, 有再青的时候; 桃花谢了, 有再开的时候。” of Zhu Ziqing’s *Transient Days* is known to many people. Its translation is “If swallows go away, they will come back again. If willows wither, they will turn green again. If peach blossoms fade, they will flower again.” All three sentences keep the same pattern to remain neat. And the sentence, starting with the word “if”, can remind readers of a well-known poetry line of Shelley, that is, “If winter comes, can spring be far away”. Hence the poetic sensation wells up in the lines. And in the same piece of prose, another parallel structure goes like “过去的日子如轻烟, 被微风吹散了; 如薄雾, 被初阳蒸融了”. The translation of it is also excellent in both form and content. “The bygone days, like wisps of smoke, have been dispersed by gentle winds, and, like thin mists, have been evaporated by the rising Sun.” Besides the neat form, the two parts of the antithesis also reproduce the exact conception of the original by the exactly same number of words.

Also in *Autumn in Peiping*, Lao She exemplifies a series of places of interest. “在南方每年到了秋天, 总要想起陶然亭的芦花, 钓鱼台的柳影, 西山的虫唱, 玉泉的月夜, 潭柘寺的钟声。” While in translation, Zhang Peiji creates a neat pattern to juxtapose the instance with a unified “with” phrase, namely, “Peiping’s Tao Ran Ting with its reed catkins, Diao Yu Tai with its shady willow trees, Western Hills with their chirping insects, Yu Quan Mountain on a moonlight evening and Tan Zhe Si with its reverberating bell”. As to the translation of the sentence “比起北国的秋来, 正像是黄酒之与白干, 稀饭之与馍馍, 鲈鱼之与大闸蟹, 黄犬之与骆驼”, professor Zhang adopts ellipsis to maintain the parallel structure.

## (2) Adjustment of Sentence Pattern

While dealing with parallel structure, most times the translator would strive to maintain its form as well as the content. However, the rest sentence patterns usually require adjustment to suit the English writing, since the acknowledged differences between Chinese and English. The Chinese language characterizes a structure of “bamboo” with many a short clause connected with one another by meaning, while the English language features a structure of “tree” with lots of clauses linked with each other by grammar. Thus, in order to complete the shift unnoticeably, the translator has to take initiative to analyze, locking on the primary meaning and then reconstructing the translated structure.

In Selected Modern Chinese Prose Writings are many excellent illustrations of such adjustment. For instance, in *Fond Memories of Peiping* by Yu Dafu, there is a long sentence. “面向着积水滩，背后是城墙，坐在石上看水中的小蝌蚪或苇叶上的嫩蜻蜓，我可以快乐地坐一天，心中完全安适，无所求也无所怕，像小儿安睡在摇篮里。” Its rendering goes as follows: “I can spend a whole day enjoying myself sitting on a rock to observe tiny tadpoles in the water or tender dragonflies on reeds while facing me lies Ji Shui Tan Pond and right behind me rises the high city wall. I can thus enjoy a perfect inner calm, free from any desire or fear, like a child sleeping peacefully in the cradle.” In translation, professor Zhang divides the long one into two separated sentences and links them by a connection word “thus” to manifest cause and effect relation, which is implicit in the original.

Also in *The Sight of Father’s Back*, Zhu Ziqing creates a classic scenario about the view of father’s back. “我看见他戴着黑布小帽，穿着黑布大马褂，深青色棉袍，蹒跚地走到铁道边，慢慢探身下去，尚不大难。可是他穿过铁道，要爬上那边月台，就不容易了。” Its translation is “I watched him hobble towards the railway track in his black skullcap, black cloth mandarin jacket and dark blue cotton-padded cloth long gown. He had little trouble climbing down the railway track, but it was a lot more difficult for him to climb up that platform after crossing the railway track.” Although the two versions both consist of two sentences, they differentiate one another by the pause. In the translation, professor Zhang restructures the sentence by describing father’s attire in the first sentence and leaving the action depiction all to the following one. Such a rearrangement results in a clarified logic, an accentuated focus and a compacted sentence.

## (3) Others

The mentioned two perspectives are far from enough, or rather only a fraction of, demonstrations of the translator’s activeness in semantic level. Addition and omission are feasibly adopted. For example, in *I Took a Wooden Boat* by Ye Shengtao, there are two sentences: “一路上数不尽的滩，礁石到处都是，要出事，随时可以出。还有盗匪。” The second one has been translated into “To complicate matters, there are bandits lurking around”. Non-verbal clauses have been added purposely to better connect the two sentences and reveal the implied information in the Chinese text. In addition, free translation is almost inevitable in most prose translation. “进去吧，里边没人” from *The Sight of Father’s Back* is rendered as “Go back to your seat. Don’t leave your things alone.” Separately, the translation seems to totally deviate from the original, but taking the whole into consideration, it is the most suitable.

### 3.1.3 On Textual Level

To begin with this section, one clarification should be made, that is, the section will exclusively focus on the recreation of the artistic conception. Compared with the translation of words and sentences, it is much more difficult to reproduce the style, the keynote, and the poetic conception on the whole. The original author’s intention must be conceived before it can be conveyed. These two procedures both entail the translator’s active involvement.

Behind each piece of prose translation is enclosed with a short tip, in which professor Zhang makes a brief introduction on the writing background of each prose, plus with his own interpretation of its theme, value or keynote. Take *National Crisis vs. Heroic Nation* as an example. “李大钊此文载于1923年12月20日《新民国》上，短小隽永，堪称一首诗意盎然的抒情散文诗。作者用象征比喻等手法，说明历史发展的必然规律以及中国革命面临的艰难险阻。译时除文字须符合英语规范外，应力求传达原文的形象，诗一般的美感和雍容警策的笔调。” The tips by professor Zhang are evidence of his active involvement in the conception, which serves as preparation for the translation.

And in translation, the recreation procedure, Professor Zhang Peiji provides aesthetic enjoyment via his mastery of diction, skillfulness in the layout and accomplishment in art. The translation of the prose *Smile* written by Bing Xin serves as an excellent example. “雨声渐渐的住了，窗帘后隐隐的透进清光来。推开窗户一看，呀！凉云散了，树叶上的残滴，映着月儿，好似萤光千点，闪闪烁烁的动着。” Its translation goes like this. “As

the rain gradually ceased to patter, a glimmer of light began to filter into the room through the window curtain. I opened the window and looked out. Ah, the rain clouds had vanished and the remaining raindrops on the tree leaves glistened tremulously under the moonlight like myriads of fireflies.” “Patter” and “filter” impress readers with the ceasing sound of “the rain” and the image of a vague “glimmer of light”. Two vivid verbs entertain readers with concrete senses of hearing and sight to bring them into the depicted spot. Further on, the images of “rain cloud” “glistening raindrops on leaves” and “fireflies” combine to reproduce a picturesque sight in a raining evening. Simply and lively, the English translation blesses us with a refreshing and joyful sensation.

Still from *Smile*, “驴脚下的泥，兀自滑滑着。田沟里的水，潺潺的流着。近村的绿树，都笼在湿烟里。弓儿似的新月，挂在树梢。” It is rendered into “The ground under my donkey’s feet was slippery with mud. The water in the field ditches was murmuring. The green trees in the neighboring villages were shrouded in a mist. The crescent new moon looked as if hanging on the tip of the trees.” From the “slippery ground” to “murmuring water”, then to “green trees in a mist”, and then to “the crescent moon”, readers’ vista is led from low to high, and from closeness to distance. The flowing English creates an idyllic scene.

### 3.2 Translators’ Passiveness

In accordance with the theories of Manipulation School, translators will “manipulate” the original text, while they are also “manipulated” by both inner and outer factors, namely, the translators’ purposes (which will be discussed in next section), the poetics and patronage.

Reviewing the development of translation theory in China, one can find that the standards varies from Yan Fu’s “faithfulness, expressiveness, elegance” to Fu Lei’s “likeness in spirit” and then to Qian Zhongshu’s “sublimation”. However, since Venuti put forward his theory on “translators’ invisibility”, the opposition against “the cultural hegemony” prevails quickly. It has wakened up people’s awareness to protect and promote a nation’s own culture. In Professor Zhang’s translation, we can find the trace of such ideology. For example, in *Mid-Life Loneliness* by Xiao Mianzun, there is a sentence as follows “……其实只是一种社交上的客套，和”顿首”“百拜”同是仪式上的虚伪。” Its translation goes as “all these are, in fact, nothing but civilities of social life, as hypocritical as the polite formula *dunshou* (kowtow) or *baibai* (a hundred greetings) used after the signature in old-fashioned Chinese letter-writing.” Both “顿首” and “百拜” are translated into Chinese pinyin followed by English explanations, rather than into literal translation directly. Also in *Autumn in Peiping*, one sentence goes like this: “在南方每年到了秋天，总要想起陶然亭的芦花，钓鱼台的柳影，西山的虫唱，玉泉的月夜，潭柘寺的钟声。” All the places of interest have been rendered by transliteration instead of translation based on meaning.

As to the influence of patronage, we can find hints from the preface of the *Selected Modern Chinese Prose Writings*, which is written by Professor Zhang Peiji himself. It reveals that before the publication of this collection, Luo Tingliang, a professor of Beijing Foreign Language University, has ever carefully read all the prose one by one and made much valuable advice. It is hard to prove how these translations are influenced, yet it is justified for one to predict the existence of the influence from professor Luo.

### 3.3 Translators’ Purposiveness

In Manipulation School, the inner factor affecting translation lies in translators themselves. They would try to adjust their translation to suit the poetics of their times and at the same time intend to influence the development of it as well. In other words, translators’ purposiveness imposes an influence on the translation.

In the preface of the second volume of the analogy, professor Zhang writes down his purposes of compiling this book in black and white. It is written to provide some practical examples for youngsters to study the techniques and theories of Chinese-English translation of literature, to deepen their understanding and love towards Chinese culture so as to arouse their interests of introducing Chinese culture into the outer world, and to provide a platform for foreign scholars to conduct researches on the development of academic circle since the May 4th Movement in 1919. His purposiveness, serving as the inner factor, together with the outer factors mentioned in previous sector, has affected the translation, particularly obvious in the rendering those connected with Chinese culture.

## 4. Conclusion

This paper is a tentative case study on Zhang Peiji’s *Selected Modern Chinese Prose Writings* to appreciate and appraise his prose translation. It is conducted from the perspective of translators’ subjectivity, a theory well-grounded on studies and researches of previous translation theorists in influential schools.

Yet in the paper are certain defects. First, just like any still-developing object, the theory of translators’ subjectivity is short of explicit definition of various relevant concepts. Further and deeper studies are expected.

Moreover, there is no hard and fast criterion to measure up the effects produced by the application of subjectivity. This blankness leads to controversy: what one man regards as fair translation may turn out to be a foul one for another. Besides, another drawback of this paper lies in the limited reference to those translation theories. The paper is written on the basis of a browse of rather than intensive study on those various schools mentioned. In particular, much reference to their theories comes from the Chinese edition instead of the original English version.

Translators' subjectivity is the research object of many; yet it is an evolving theory without systematic ideology. The paper written is only a preliminary study following the footsteps of those pioneers. There are defects in it, yet it is expected to explore new trial for translation theories and provide a possible viewpoint for prose appreciation.

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