

Functional Equivalence in Kinship Terms Translation --A Case of Shapiro's *Outlaws of the Marsh*

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Keywords: Kinship Terms; *Outlaws of the Marsh*; functional equivalence

Abstract. Considering the historical and cultural differences between Chinese and English, translators may encounter some obstacles when translating kinship terms from Chinese to English. Thus, the present author is devoted to studying their translations with the case of Shapiro's *Outlaws of the Marsh* from the perspective of functional equivalence, with the aim of deepening the understanding of different kinship systems between China and the west, and strengthening mutual understanding and cultural exchanges. It is found that Shapiro has achieved the functional equivalence in some kinship terms, but not in all relations, due to his lack of Chinese culture awareness.

Introduction

In the address system of a language, kinship terms are clearly highlighted to mean "category words by means of which an individual is taught to recognize the significant groupings in the social structure into which he is born" (Leach, 1958). Due to different history and culture, the connotations of Chinese kinship terms do not completely correspond with those of English, which adds obstacles to the translation from Chinese to English.

Shui Hu Zhuan, as one of the Chinese classical literature, tells the epic story of a peasant revolt during the end of the Northern Song Dynasty. This classic with a rich resource of kinship terms, reflects Chinese patriarchal system, social style, customs and etiquettes. There are in total four full-translated English versions featured with superior quality and wide-range influence, namely *All Men Are Brothers* (By Peral S. Buck), *Water Margin* (By J.H. Jackson), *Outlaws of the Marsh* (By Sidney Shapiro) and *The Marshes of Mount Liang* (By John and Alex-dent Young). This study takes the case of Shapiro's version (1993) to analyze the kinship terms from the view of functional equivalence, with the aim of deepening the understanding of different kinship systems between China and west, and strengthening mutual understanding and cultural exchanges.

Address Terms and Functional Equivalence

In the west, Morgan (1997), an American anthropologist, first published his masterpiece entitled *System of Consanguinity and Affinity of the Human Family*, a foundation and culmination of research into the variety of kinship terminologies. Afterwards, Tian (1998) explored comprehensively the whole interpersonal appellation system, the earliest monograph comparing Chinese and Western interpersonal appellation system from the interdisciplinary perspective. Moreover, Zhu (2012) tried to tackle problems in translating kinship terms from a cultural perspective. No one yet has conducted any specific translation study based on a classic case in view of kinship terms until today.

Functional equivalence was first put forward by Nida (1964) and refers to four aspects — lexical equivalence, syntactic equivalence, textual equivalence and stylistic equivalence. The definition informs that the reproduction of meaning should be given priority over conservation of form and the translator should strive for equivalence firstly in meaning, then in style. In *Outlaws of the Marsh*, there are people from all ranks, possessed with different social status, education and family background, surely resulting into varied ways of addresses. Concerning the limited study on

Shapiro's translation of *Outlaws of the Marsh* in recent years, this research intends to conduct an in-depth analysis in terms of kinship terms from the perspective of functional equivalence.

Translation of Kinship Terms in *Outlaws of the Marsh*

Consanguinity

Immediate Family

Chinese kinship terms system is more complex and rigorous with a number of addressing words compared with the simpler and fewer ones in the west. The kinship system in China belongs to Sultan system that puts more weight to males and it has terms for both paternal and maternal sides. Owing to the generation and age-orientation, there are obvious hierarchical relationships among family members. In contrast, English kinship system that belongs to Eskimo system, emphasizes only on the nuclear family, without clear distinction between the family members on either paternal or maternal sides.

First, Chinese kinship system differs from English in consanguinity, kinsmen by blood. For example, siblings in immediate family (or nuclear family) in Chinese are not exactly the same as they are in English, even though other relations such as parents, children and spouses are fundamentally correspondent with each other (See Table 1).

Table 1 Terms of immediate family

Relation to Ego	Chinese Term	English Term
Father/ Mother	Fu qin (父亲) /Mu qin (母亲)	Father /Mother
Son/ Daughter	Er zi (儿子) /Nv er(女儿)	Son / Daughter
Husband /Wife	Zhang fu(丈夫) /Qi zi (妻子)	Husband / Wife
Elder brother/Younger brother	Ge ge (哥哥) /Di di (弟弟)	Brother
Elder sister/Younger sister	Jie jie (姐姐) /Mei mei (妹妹)	Sister

In general, when translating these kinship terms, equivalence in referential meaning can be applied. However, sometimes Chinese kinship terms are shown in different forms. For example, In *Outlaws of the Marsh*, the kinship terms for father include *fu qin* (父亲), *lao fu* (老父), *ye* (爷), *fu* (父), *lao die* (老爹), *a-die* (阿爹), *die die* (爹爹), *jia zun* (家尊), *jia fu* (家父) and *ling zun* (令尊). Here is one example:

Eg.1 高速喝道：“这厮！你爷是街上使花棒卖药的，你省的甚么武艺卜！.....”

(Trans) “Rogue,” cried Gao. “Your father was only a medicine peddler who twirled a staff to attract a crowd. What do you know about military arts?”

In Eg.1, Gao Qiu called Wang Jin's father *ye* (爷) in order to humiliate him. By translating the original meaning of *ye* (爷), namely *father*, can hardly express the author's intention. Therefore, Shapiro fulfilled the equivalence in pragmatic meaning by amplification. He added “*only*” to show Gao Qiu's scornful attitude towards Wang Jin.

Extended Family

Extended family by blood includes one's grandparents, grandchildren, uncles, aunts, cousins, nephews and nieces, etc (as shown in Table 2). The translation of this kind of terms from Chinese to English would be troublesome, which can be found in Eg.2:

Table 2 Terms of extended family

Chinese Kinship Terms		English Kinship Terms
Father's Side	Mother's Side	Father's Side and Mother's Side
祖父/祖母	外祖父/外祖母	Grandfather/Grandmother
大伯/叔叔/姑妈	舅舅/姨妈	Uncle/Aunt
堂兄弟姐妹	表兄弟姐妹	Cousin
侄子/侄女	外甥/外甥女	Nephew/Niece
孙子/孙女	外孙/外孙女	Grandson/Granddaughter

Eg.2 孙新、孙立的姑娘，却是我母亲，以此他两个又是我的姑舅兄弟。

(Trans) And my mother is Sun Xin and Sun Li's aunt. So they're also cousins, but on my mother's side.

Gu niang (姑娘), which means a young female, is common to address someone's daughter or young female in modern times. But in Song Dynasty, it means "aunt" on paternal side. In Eg.2, Shapiro paraphrased the source text and ignored the blood lineage, translating *gu niang* (姑娘) as *aunt*, which failed to achieve the functional equivalence in referential meaning and may cause confusion, as the word *aunt* can refer to both paternal and maternal side.

Also, Chinese kinship terms for the offsprings of father's siblings are not same. *Shubo-xiongdi* (叔伯兄弟) are used to address children of father's brothers, while *gujiu-xiongdi* (姑舅兄弟) are for mother's side. In English, they are both addressed as cousins without indicating gender, age, or blood lineage. In Eg.2, Shapiro translated *gujiu-xiongdi* (姑舅兄弟) as "cousin, but on my mother's side", indicating the blood relationships among characters as well as the authentic Chinese culture.

Affinity

Lineal Relatives by Blood of Spouses

In kinship system, affinities are terms designating the relationship between family members bonded not by blood but by marriage. There are two type of affinity: lineal relatives by blood of spouses (Table 3) and spouses of relatives by blood (Table 4).

Table 3 Lineal relatives by blood of spouses

Chinese Kinship Term		English Kinship Term
Husband's Side	Wife's Side	Husband's Side and Wife's Side
公公	丈人	Father-in-law
婆婆	丈母娘	Mother-in-law
姑子	姨子	Sister-in-law
小叔子/大伯子	舅子	Brother-in-law

Lineal relatives by blood of spouses can be translated as "-in-law". But in literary works, it seems not to be so simple. Brothers of wife in *Outlaws of the Marsh* are called *qi jiu* (妻舅), *qi di* (妻弟), *jiu zi* (舅子), *a jiu* (阿舅), *xiao jiu* (小舅), *da jiu* (大舅), and *jiu jiu* (舅舅).

Eg.3 曹正道：“……却叫小人的妻弟带六个火家，直送到那山下，把一条索子绑了师父……”（《水浒传》第十七回）

(Trans) "...My wife's younger brother and few stalwarts will go with us to the foot of the mountain, and there we'll bind the reverend..."

Qi di (妻弟) refers to the younger brother of wife, which is correspondent with "brother-in-law" in English. However, "brother-in-law" also refers to other relationships such as husband's elder brother and younger brother. If the general word "brother-in-law" were rendered, special Chinese

culture would be neglected and ambiguity may be caused. Shapiro's translation "my wife's younger brother" achieved equivalence functionally.

Spouses of Relatives by Blood

Spouses of relatives by blood include spouses of lineal relatives by blood (Table 4) and collateral relatives by blood (omitted, almost absent in *Outlaws of the Marsh*). For example, Chinese kinship terms for daughter's husband in *Outlaws of the Marsh* are *xu* (婿), *nv xu* (女婿), *xian xu* (贤婿), and *ling xu* (令婿).

Table 4 Spouses of lineal relatives by blood

Relation to Ego	Chinese Kinship Term	English Kinship Term
Elder brother's wife/ Younger brother's wife	嫂子 (Sao zi) 弟媳 (Di xi)	Sister-in-law
Elder sister's husband/ Younger sister's husband	姐夫 (Jie fu) 妹夫 (Mei fu)	Brother-in-law
Daughter's husband	女婿 (Nv xu)	Son-in-law
Son's wife	儿媳 (Er xi)	Daughter-in-law

Eg.4 和尚道：“前日一个施主家传的此法，做了三五石米，明日送几瓶来与令婿吃。”

(Trans) "One of our patrons taught us how to make it. We've put to brew four or five bushels of rice. When they're ready we'll send your son-in-law a few bottles."

In Chinese, *Ling xu* (令婿) is a term used to address the son-in-law of others, while "nv xu (女婿)" equivalent to "son-in-law", is rendered as daughter's husband. In Eg.4, the monk raised the status of addressees' son-in-law, and show his respect and warmth with the expression "ling xu (令婿)". Shapiro paid no attention to the speaker's intention, just simply translating "ling xu (令婿)" as "son-in-law", which failed to achieve the pragmatic equivalence.

Other Relations

Nominal Kinship

Other relations such as nominal kinship and fictive kinship also lead to differences between China and the west. Nominal kinship refers to non-blood or non-marriage relation. In China, people are possessed with nominal kinship for kinds of purpose, such as health, intimacy and benefits, with "干-" or "义-" added before the addresses. In English-speaking countries, this phenomenon is scarce except the legal adoption, such as "adopted-" or "foster-", which does not denote any sort of implication as it is in Chinese. In the following translation, "gan niang" is just a case in point:

Eg.5 西门庆也笑道：“王娘，你且来。我问你，隔壁这个雌儿，是谁的老尘？”

(Trans) Ximen chuckled. "Tell me, godmother, whose woman is that pullet next door?"

In *Outlaws of the Marsh*, Ximen had a crush on *Golden Lotus* (*Pan Jinlian*), the wife of *Wu the elder* (*Wu Dalang*). Mistress Wang helped Ximen commit adultery with Golden Lotus, and she is benefactor of Ximen from this point of view. Therefore, Ximen called Mistress Wang *gan niang* (干娘) so as to flatter her with evil intention. If literally translated as "adoptive mother", the relationship between Ximen and Mistress Wang will be misunderstood. Shapiro's translation "godmother" manifested Ximen's respect and flattery toward Mistress Wang thus obtained functional equivalence.

Fictive Kinship

A distinctive feature of Chinese kinship system is that some kinship terms are frequently used to address non-relatives or fictive kinship. There are a number of extensively-used fictive kinship terms in Chinese, such as *ye* (爷), *jie jie* (姐姐) and *shu* (叔). For example:

Eg.6 李逵只得叫：“爷爷，你饶我住一住！”

(Trans) “My lord and master, forgive me and let me stop!”

In Eg.6, *Li Kui* called *Dai zong* “爷爷” (*ye ye*). Whoever reads the book knows that *Dai zong* is not *Li kui*'s grandfather but a friend, and *Li Kui* respected *Dai zong* and asked for his forgiveness. In consequence, here “爷爷” (*ye ye*) was translated into “*My lord and master*”, explicitly manifesting the character's intention, otherwise the target readers would confuse their relations. Pragmatically, Shapiro's translation achieved the functional equivalence.

Conclusion

To sum up, translation for kinship terms must be emphasized since Chinese Kinship system has much difference with English one. By conducting this research, the author found that Nida's functional equivalence has been well applied in translating the kinship terms even though Shapiro committed some inappropriateness in some relations. Yet his translation still contributes greatly to the popularity and prestige of this classic throughout the world. It is also worthwhile to point out that some kinship terms are not quite clearly differentiated as before due to China's reform and open-up together with the influence of western ideology. Chinese family has accordingly become smaller and some kinship terms have been abandoned. Lastly, the translation of *Outlaws of the Marsh* has exerted the immense impacts in the field of cross-culture communications, and enlightened other researchers in theoretical field and translation practices.

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