

On Features of Fu Lei's Translation from the Perspective of *the Conquest of Happiness*

Yinghua Niu

Northwest Normal University, Lanzhou 730070, Gansu Provinces, China

Abstract: Under the background of globalization, translation is not only an academic activity, but also has far-reaching influence on cultural exchanges. As a world-renowned translator, Fu Lei has played a leading role in today's translation field. Therefore, the paper firstly talks about Fu Lei's life experience and his thought of resemblance. It is his life experience that makes him have his own unique understanding of translation art. Secondly, the thesis analyses Fu Lei's translation thoughts through his broad interest, rigorous attitude and emphasis on the art of writing. Finally, the paper combines his translation strategies with *the Conquest of Happiness* to illustrate how it can be more easily understood and accepted by the target language readers through the processing of sentence patterns and the use of Chinese allusions. It comes to the conclusion that Fu Lei's unique life experience, rich artistic accomplishment and rigorous academic attitude are of great benefit to his translation. Thus it can be said that Fu Lei's translation thoughts and strategies are enlightenment to all aspects of translation studies.

Keywords: Spiritual Resemblance; Translation Strategies; *The Conquest of Happiness*

Publication date: February, 2020

Publication online: 29 February 2020

***Corresponding author:** Yinghua Niu, 1050231546@qq.com

1 Introduction

Language is the cornerstone of people's communication. Through translation, the transformation and communication of different languages can be realized. Therefore, the importance of translation is self-evident. For a long time, the most important factor in translation activities-translator has not been given due

attention. The translator is simply regarded as the "tool" of translation, which is only the "bridge" between the author and the reader, and can not be compared with the creation. Therefore, this paper takes translator Fu Lei as the main line to elaborate on the enlightenment of his translation strategies by introducing his life experiences, translation thoughts and so on.

The Conquest of Happiness is a masterpiece of Russell's prose, which explores the root of people's unhappiness and provides guidance for people's pursuit of happiness. It is listed as one of the best books in human history. Fu Lei, a great translator, is famous for his rich and excellent translation achievements. He devoted his whole life to translation and made outstanding contributions to the dissemination of east and west cultures. Looking at the 34 literary masterpieces translated in his lifetime, except for two English works, the rest are French literary masterpieces. Therefore, Fu Lei's translation of French literary works has been studied by the academic circles, while English works such as *The Conquest of Happiness* have seldom been touched upon.

The paper falls into five chapters. Chapter one is the introduction. It introduces Fu Lei's translation thought and its application in *The Conquest of Happiness* and then, it discusses the main idea of this thesis.

Chapter two introduces Fu Lei's life experience and his spiritual resemblance. Chapter three expounds Fu Lei's translation thoughts through his broad interest, rigorous attitude and emphasis on the art of writing.

Chapter four combines his translation strategies with *the Conquest of Happiness* to illustrate how it can be more easily understood and accepted by the target language readers.

Chapter five is the conclusion, which emphasizes Fu Lei's translation thoughts are of great significance in the

field of translation. At the same time, the deficiencies of this study are summarized.

Therefore, this paper studies the translation of *The Conquest of Happiness* to understand his English translation characteristics and strategies, with a view to providing guidance for the future field of English translation.

2 An Introduction to Fu Lei

2.1 Fu Lei's Life Experience and Thoughts

2.1.1 Fu Lei's Life Experience

On April 7, 1908, Fu Lei was born in Shanghai. At the age of four, his father died of illness and he was raised by his mother. The younger brothers died in the same year that their father died, so Fu Lei had a hard life with his mother since childhood. His mother placed all her hopes on Fu Lei, which was quite strict. Fu Lei worked very hard at an early age, and developed the habit of doing things rigorously. At the age of seven, Fu Lei's mother invited teachers to teach him the Four Books and the Five Classics, and hired teachers to teach him English and arithmetic. At the age of ten, Fu Lei began to study French. When he was nineteen, he went to France to study at his own expense, which made his life start a new journey^[1].

During his study in France, while studying French at the Faculty of Literature of the University of Paris, Fu Lei attended Sorbonne Art Seminar and the Faculty of Art History of Louvre. In addition, he often goes to major art museums to study the masterpieces of artists, which greatly improves his appreciation of art and the realm of art criticism. These experiences have greatly benefited his ability to translate French literature.

Therefore, Fu Lei's approach to translation can be attributed to two factors: on the one hand, during his study in France, in order to strengthen his language ability, he tried to translate French literary works which was a good exercise for his translation ability; on the other hand, Fu Lei's artistic attainment is very profound. He studied art theory in France in his youth. Since returning home, he had been engaged in art archaeology and art teaching, but he was always incompatible with the society and could not work with others. So he finally chose a career of translation for himself. Fu Lei has accomplished his life through continuous struggle, and made great contributions to the development of translation in China.

2.1.2 Fu Lei's Spiritual Resemblance

Fu Lei is a famous translator who has been engaged in literary translation all his life. He regards literary work as a noble and sacred cause. He always holds a rigorous and responsible attitude towards translation. He takes his large number of translations as a proof, and sets up a school of his own, and puts forward the "spiritual resemblance", which can be regarded as a major breakthrough in the field of translation theory in China. Fu Lei's thought of resemblance includes two aspects: form resemblance and spiritual resemblance. The literal pursuit of the equivalence between the translated text and the original text is called form resemblance, and the connotative pursuit of the equivalence between the translated text and the original text is called spiritual resemblance. As far as Fu Lei's translation experience is concerned, he pays great attention to the words and sentences in the original text and tries to retain them in the translation so as to preserve the charm of the original. Fu Lei pays more attention to the similarity of spirit than the similarity of forms. The main feature of the theory "spiritual resemblance" lies in the fact that translation should be included in the category of aesthetics. The spiritual resemblance presents that translation is not a rigid word-by-word way to express the original text, but a multi-level transmission of ideas. This is especially true in literary translation.

Fu Lei points out the key point of literary translation and puts the deliberation of words and sentences onto the artistic level. What is more valuable is that he introduced the important viewpoint of "vividness" in Chinese traditional aesthetics into translation theory, thus broadening the research field of translation theory and laying a foundation for the later establishment of translation aesthetics. Therefore, the concept of "resemblance" marks the great progress of translation in China. Translation theory has changed from generalization and abstraction to specialization and concretization.

2.2 The Main Foreign Works Translated by Fu Lei

In Fu Lei's translation career, he left many well-known translations, such as Biography of Celebrities and Jean-Christophe, which are still the preferred translations for many readers. It can be said that Fu Lei is a well-known translator of French literary works and a bridge between Chinese and French cultural exchanges. Therefore,

Fu Lei's translation of French literary works such as Balzac's famous works *Father Griot* and *The Abbot of Dur* have been warmly studied by the academic circles, while English works such as *The Conquest of Happiness* have seldom been mentioned.

The Conquest of Happiness by Bertrand Russell, a famous British philosopher, was written in 1930. In 1920, Russell was invited to give lectures in China, bringing a fresh atmosphere to Chinese society, which was greatly sought after by the Chinese people, and even set off a "Russell fever" in China at that time. Such a popular enthusiasm laid a broad foundation for the translation and dissemination of Russell's works in China. There are no profound philosophical principles in the book *The Conquest of Happiness*, nor can we find hard and profound thinking, but the author's own practical experience and insights^[2]. The author hopes that through these articles, those who have suffered from misfortune but have not enjoyed happiness can diagnose their unhappiness symptoms, and become happy and sweet. *The Conquest of Happiness* is one of the few English works translated by Fu Lei.

In the early 1940s, China was in the period of Anti-Japanese War, and its social contradictions were complex. Still Fu Lei devoted himself to translation, and this kind of devotion is not a seclusion but a way to convey the concern of society. As a translator, Fu Lei's choice of the original text was influenced by ideology at that time. The war-torn Chinese society had a strong desire for a peaceful, stable and happy life. *The Conquest of Happiness* made people see the dawn in the miserable social life. For the people in the war, this work undoubtedly provided enough relaxed space and mood.

In 1956, Fu Lei translated *Biography of Beethoven* twice, and his translation coincided with Beethoven's spirit of becoming a world-famous musician from a disabled person. In Fu Lei's translation, Roman Roland seems to have a strong emotional resonance and inspiration. This kind of similar style reflects not only Fu Lei's excellent translation skills but also his spiritual pursuit of saving the nation from extinction in turbulent times. Different stories and lives have the same destiny, which makes Fu Lei embody the idea of spiritual coexistence in his translation.

In the past thirty years, Fu Lei has translated dozens of foreign literary works. These translations of Fu Lei demonstrate his translation ability and unique translation strategies, which enable Chinese readers to

better understand foreign literature.

3 Fu Lei's Main Translation Strategies

3.1 Paying Attention to the Spiritual Resemblance

Fu Lei's achievements in translation literature are not only manifested in a large number of translated works, but also in unique theories he puts forward on translation. Yan Fu put forward in the 19th century that translation literature should meet the criteria of "xin, da, ya", which has been accepted and used by later generations. The translation theory proposed by Fu Lei does not contradict the "xin, da ya" advocated by Yan Fu, but is more based on his own understanding of translation work and his long-term experience in translation practice. One of Fu Lei's most important translation theories is the "spiritual resemblance".

The literal pursuit of the equivalence between the translated text and the original text is called "form resemblance", and the connotative pursuit of the equivalence between the translated text and the original text is called "spiritual resemblance". Various languages have their own characteristics. Translation is not a straight line of words and sentences, but a multi-level transmission of meanings. From this we can see that "form" is the beauty of the linguistic structure composed of the vocabulary, grammar, style and rhetoric of the original language, which can be seen as the dominant thing; "spirit" is the beauty of the "non-morpheme phenomenon" of linguistic, which is a high-level and deep aesthetic experience. Fu Lei pays more attention to the spiritual resemblance rather than form.

Fu Lei's requirement of "spiritual resemblance" concretely states that the author should turn the original work into his own possession before translating a work, and build up his own feelings and thoughts on the original work. Another requirement of "spiritual resemblance" is that translated literature should pay attention to aesthetics, and should have ingenious layout and rich colors from the style to the language. The translation of articles should not be constrained by the form of words. Fu Lei's profound understanding of translation is a unique achievement in translation literature. Compared with Yan Fu's theory of "xin, da, ya", the great progress of "spiritual resemblance" lies in elevating the translated literature to an aesthetic level. It is believed that translation is not only a transformation between languages, but also an innovation and

breakthrough of traditional Chinese translation theory and translation literature.

3.2 A Solemn Attitude Towards Translation

Fu Lei elaborates that translators should be cautious in choosing works. Fu Lei emphasizes that translators must understand the works and themselves carefully and strengthen their own knowledge. He believes that translation should be thorough in reading, deeply understanding the original, transforming them into their own fields of knowledge and then starting to write. "To translate a favorite work, you have to read it four times and five times before you can remember the plot and story well, analyze it thoroughly," he said. "Choosing the original works is like making friends. Some people are always incompatible with me, so you don't have to be reluctant. Some people know that they are bosom friends at first sight. But even good friends still need time to understand each other." (Fu, 2005, p. 96) Therefore, he sincerely warns the translator to recognize their own shortcomings and strengths. Those who are not good at reasoning do not translate theoretical books reluctantly. Those who do not know how to make poetry should never translate poetry, so that they are not poetic at all. Here, we can see Fu Lei's rigorous translation attitude, regarding art as life.

Fu Lei's translation process also embodies his solemn quality. Before Fu Lei begins to translate, he always reads the original works four or five times, understands the charm and style of them, and then begins to translate. When confronted with something he does not understand, he will write letters to his French friends to ask for advice and then writes on the manuscript. In June 1985, Beijing held the "Fu Lei's Calligraphy Exhibition", exhibiting the original manuscript of Balzac's famous work *The Abbot of Dur* translated by Fu Lei. These manuscripts had been revised three times. Fu Lei once said that if translation is to be done well, it must be revised, revised again, revised three times and revised four times. It is always difficult to translate words perfectly at one time. Those who think they are satisfied at that time would still find it inappropriate afterwards. Reading Fu Lei's works makes people feel that he is indeed a translator who deliberately pursues the perfection of his works.

Famous translator Jin Shenghua once pointed out: "As for Fu Lei, if any work is not read intensively four or five times, it will never be translated, which is the basic method of translation." (Jin, 1996, p. 163) Fu Lei is respected and loved by future generations and can be

regarded as a model in the field of translation. Today, his translation thoughts also inspire contemporary translators to think and study carefully. His translation principles are still one of the criteria for evaluating literary translation today.

3.3 Broad Interest, Miscellaneous and Fine Scholarship of the Translator

Mr. Fu Lei is an outstanding literary translator in China. He has rich translation works and excellent translation skills. He is also an artist with profound attainments. He knows the fields of architecture, painting, music, sculpture and so on. This article will take his interest in art and music as an example to show his extensive interest and his miscellaneous and fine scholarship of the translator.

Translation and painting go together in Fu Lei's artistic life. Fu Lei's profound artistic accomplishment in painting has far-reaching influence on the formation of his translation thoughts and translation practice. Fu Lei's interest in art criticism is extraordinary. When he was studying in France in his early years, he took art history courses. He often visited famous painters. When he returned to China in 1931, Fu Lei's first job was as a professor of Shanghai Academy of Fine Arts. The book *Twenty Lectures on World Art Works* was compiled at that time. In the art of painting, emphasis is laid on the rich lines. In the translation work, Fu Lei requires the rich use of words. Whether it is lines or words, its rich changes are to avoid the monotony of the work. The combination of literary translation and painting art is an important attempt of Fu Lei in literary translation. From this, he also skillfully combines traditional Chinese translated literature with the innovative painting art, which is his unique feature.

In his early years, Fu Lei went to France to study abroad. He comprehensively studied western music theory and read a lot of music theory works. He is not only a great translator in China, but also a famous music critic. He made an in-depth study of modern western music composers. It is not difficult to see from Fu Lei Letter that he can not only accurately grasp and distinguish the characteristics of each composer from music field, but also truly appreciate the classical beauty of each composer's representative works. Fu Lei's deep study of western music has made an indelible contribution for the promotion of western music in China. Especially in his study of Mozart, Beethoven and Chopin, we can see that his distinctive artistic outlook and profound artistic accomplishment is

a very influential leader in the field of music criticism in China^[3].

Fu Lei is not only an expert in his own field, but also an expert in other fields. Fu Lei's outstanding translation achievements are closely related to his transcendence of the simple translator and his integration of symbols such as literary critics, music critics and art connoisseurs. Fu Lei's successful practice enlightens us that only when we have a wide range of interests and thinking in a larger range of knowledge can we make remarkable achievements.

3.4 Attaching Importance to the Art of Writing

Fu Lei is a famous translator, writer and critic in the history of Chinese literature. His outstanding translation achievements can not be separated from his emphasis on the art of writing.

Fu Lei's emphasis on the art of writing is first manifested in the fluency of his translation works. The fluency of translated literature can be divided into several levels. Although some works can convey the meanings after being translated, it may be difficult for readers to appreciate the spirit and cultural connotation of the original literature. Fu Lei's translated works skillfully solve this problem. He trains his writing to better convey the charm of the original in words. He believes that translation is also a re-creation of art. This artistic beauty requirement is embodied in his specific literary works. This kind of literary works conveys the original charm under his profound writing ability.

Fu Lei's emphasis on art of writing is then manifested in his adherence to Chinese literature. Fu Lei's greatest achievement in his life is to translate many excellent western literary works. The translators are always engaged in foreign language for a long time, accept the western culture and feel the charm of Western language, they will be easily influenced by western culture and style. However, in Fu Lei's translation works, adherence to Chinese literature is an important criterion and principle. Whether using words or making sentences, we should respect and affirm the value of traditional literature. According to Fu Lei, Chinese language itself is rich in changes, whether in sentence structure or words. Translation should be an important balance between the changeability of Chinese language and the principle of respecting the original. The study of Chinese traditional culture and the application of Chinese language are part of his writing art and one of the important reasons why his translated works are well known to future generations.

4 Features of Fu Lei's Translation Reflected in the *Conquest of Happiness*

4.1 Harmonious Sentence Structure

A sentence must be organized according to a certain pattern, which is called sentence structure. In the course of the development of Chinese civilization for thousands of years, the sentence structure with Chinese characteristics has been formed. Because of the characteristics of Chinese characters, the Chinese nation favors the beauty of symmetrical and harmonious sentences, such as poetry, couplets and prose, which are difficult to find in other languages. In Fu Lei's Chinese translation of *the Conquest of Happiness*, there are many parallelisms and dual sentences. This is due to Fu Lei's tireless pursuit of perfection in translation. Examples are followed,

(1) The result is failure and disappointment, with ridicule instead of the expected adulation.

The invalid who eats from a sense of duty corresponds to the ascetic, the gormandizer to the voluptuary.

Where this occurs it makes a man unhappy or foolish if not both.

In (1) and (2), Fu Lei rewrites the translation into a dual sentence pattern. The translated version is neat in form, clear in rhythm and harmonious in tone. Dual sentences are concise in language and form a sharp contrast, which can enhance the expressive force of language and make readers more relaxed, happy and impressive in reading.

In (3), Fu Lei rewrites the adverbial clause of place in the original text into a parallelism sentence. These three short sentences are closely related in meaning, similar in structure and the same in tone. Here, they are used to express feelings by parallelism. They have a strong sense of rhythm and momentum. They are full of emotion, thus better conveying the helpless situation faced by the original author under such circumstances.

4.2 The Usage of Allusions

Allusions are stories or words in ancient books, including historical, literary and cultural allusions. Allusions come from a wide range of sources, such as folk stories, famous events in history, or well-known stories and characters in historical books and literary works. China is an ancient civilized country with a history of 5,000 years. It has rich cultural connotations and a large number of allusions. Fu Lei incorporates many allusions into his translation in order to convey

the ideas better and to make readers better understand the charm of the original works^[4]. For examples,

(4) I believe that if one took the average of well-to-do young people in our day and in the Victorian epoch,

(5) In the eighteenth century it was one of the marks of a “gentleman” to take a discriminating pleasure in literature, pictures, and music.

In (4), the translator translated “well-to-do” into “Xiaokang” with Chinese characteristics, that is, to maintain the economic condition of a moderate standard of living. This word is an ancient word and a long-term aspiration of our country. As early as the Xi Zhou Dynasty, the word “Xiaokang” appeared. This expression has been circulating until now, such as the “Xiaokangshehui”. Obviously, this kind of rewriting is undoubtedly very consistent with the ideology of China at that time.

In the fifth example, the author translates “gentleman” into “Jinshen Xiansheng”, which reflects the characteristics of the times, rather than the “Shenshi” we are more familiar with and willing to accept today. In ancient times, people called officials or had been officials “Jinshen”. In those days, the word “Shenshi” was not commonly used, so it could not be well understood and accepted by readers. In this way, allusions are used in translation, reflecting the characteristics of the times.

4.3 The Multiple Appearance of Idioms and Four-character case

Chinese idioms and four-character case show clear structure, harmonious rhythm and rich meanings. Especially Chinese idioms have a long history. Many of them are well-known and deeply loved by Chinese readers. Therefore, translating the original into many idioms and four-character case is a domesticated translation strategy which is favored by translators. In Fu Lei’s Chinese version of *the Conquest of Happiness*, the translator uses his profound literary and artistic accomplishment to make a large number of idioms and four-character squares onto the paper and make the translator feel as if he is reading a Chinese writing.

(6) To do so would seem to them shameful, like deserting from the army in the face of enemy.

(7) The world is vast and our own powers are limited.

In the sixth example, the translator translates “deserting from the army” into “Linzhengtaotuo”, which well reproduces the original’s sniffing attitude towards people who “live on their existing income”

are like the people “fleeing in the face of battle, or retreating in the face of an emergency” which makes others despise. In the seventh example, the translator translates small clauses, words and phrases into many four-character patterns. The translation is easy to read and has a strong sense of rhythm, which is suitable for Chinese expression habits.

4.4 The Split of Long Sentences

English long sentences mainly refer to “complex grammar, structure, more modifiers, including two or more complex sentences”. Due to the differences in thinking and expressing habits between the east and the west, long sentences with complex grammatical structures in English give Chinese readers a strange and puzzling feeling. Fu Lei fully considers the characteristics of Chinese and caters to the needs of target language readers. He analyses the complicated grammatical relations at different levels and divides many long sentences into flexible short sentences. Yang Jiang’s translation experience is: “One sentence in the original text is not necessarily one sentence in the translation.” Although the short sentences are loosely structured, they are incisive and concise.

(8) It is curious how different the Victorian age looks to the young of our time from what it seemed when one was living in it.

(9) A man who has never enjoyed beautiful things in the company of a woman whom he loved has not experienced to the full the magic power of which such things are capable.

In the eighth example, the original work has a subject clause and an object clause. The translator translates the subject sentence “It is curious” into “Qiguaideshi” and the other clauses are not found in the translated text, replacing them with short sentences. It will not affect the coherence and logic of the translation, but will stimulate the reader to think about the content and form a resonance with the author. In the ninth example, the original text contains three attributive clauses. The translator translates the attributive clauses into independent Chinese clauses, which greatly reduces the time and energy for the readers to analyze the relationship between sentences.

4.5 The Impulse of Translation

“Translation impulse” is an important concept in French translation theorist Antona Berman’s translation ethics which refers to translators modify their mother tongue and approach foreign languages in linguistic form.

In other words, when translators adopt “Translation impulse”, they are not limited to the language and expression habits of the target language or the aesthetic tendencies of their readers. Even when necessary, the source language can be combined with literal translation, retaining its linguistic features and cultural color, so that the target readers can experience its exotic customs.

Berman once said: “translation impulse is the inherent psychological tendency of any translator, which ‘puts the language of others’ above ‘his own language’... to change the mother tongue, confront the mother tongue with many higher non-mother tongues...” (Berman, 1984, p. 98) In the process of translating *the Conquest of Happiness*, Fu Lei also appropriately adopted the strategy of “translation impulse”, which was closely related to the ideology of the target language environment at that time. In the first half of the 20th century, China suffered from internal and external troubles and difficulties. It lagged far behind the western countries in politics, economy and culture. It was urgent for people with lofty ideals to learn democracy and science from the western developed countries. This was the objective requirement of the whole situation of China at that time, and also the original intention and purpose of translators to engage in translation^[5].

(10)...but I always say that it is not so bad to break the seventh commandment as the sixth,

In the literal translation of “the seventh commandment and” into “Di Qi Jie” and “the sixth commandment” into “Di Liu Jie”, the two commandments are from the Ten Commandments of the Bible from prostitution and killing, but Fu Lei has not carried out the translation process in detail, maintaining the style and characteristics of the source language.

The translation of *The Conquest of Happiness* is a model of absorbing foreign languages into smooth Chinese language. However, after careful reading of Fu’s translation, we find that under Fu Lei’s fluent and sophisticated Chinese language, there is also a domestication of Western languages, which has impact on the norm of mother tongue.

5 Conclusion

Under the background of cultural globalization, the importance of literary translation is obvious. Translation

is not only a professional academic activity, but also a cross-cultural communication. Fu Lei’s translation criteria and strategies are of great significance to literary translation in the new era.

Fu Lei, the translator chosen in this paper, is a master of translation in the 20th century in China. He is a translator with excellent moral and artistic qualities. He not only has profound literary attainments and excellent artistic accomplishments, but also has a childlike heart. The selected work is *the Conquest of Happiness*, which is seldom studied by translators. Fu Lei’s translation characteristics are comprehensively analyzed from four aspects: personal experience, translation style, translation strategies and the expression in his works. By using the methods of illustration, comparative study and induction, the influences of translators’ personal preferences, literary accomplishment, aesthetic needs and attitude towards translation on the quality of the translated works are summarized. In view of the above analysis, the author draws a more comprehensive view on Fu Lei’s translation strategy.

The innovation of this paper lies in that it has studied the works that few people have studied. Fu Lei’s translation of French literary works is well-known both in China and abroad, but his translation strategies in English works are seldom studied. Therefore, this study may fill in some blank of research. The inadequacy of this study lies in the study of Fu Lei’s translation impulse, due to the lack of relevant materials, it is not be fully explained.

It is hoped that this paper will arouse more people to study and discuss the translation strategies of *the Conquest of Happiness* in a more comprehensive way.

References

- [1] Ezio A & Poccia. Lost in Translation[J]. Nursing Management (Springhouse), 2005(3): 4-5.
- [2] Marcin Lewandowski. On denominalization in Polish-English translation[J]. Lebende Sprachen, 2015(1): 46.
- [3] Newmark P. Approaches to Translation[M]. Hertfordshire: Prentice Hall, 1982/2001.
- [4] Toury G. Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond[M]. Amsterdam/ Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2001.
- [5] Zhongshe Lu. On Translating Chinese Prose Presentations[J]. Taylor journal, 2006(1): 32-39.