ABSTRACT

Lin Shu, a translator who knew no foreign languages, but published 187 translations, is still considered a controversial figure up to this day. He managed to win accolades and recognition from his contemporaries with his translated novels, and two of his early attempts “La Dame aux Camellias” and “Uncle Tom’s Cabin” also stirred up enormous emotions and reactions in the late Qing Dynasty literary scene.

Though he was considered successful in terms of readership, in the latter part of his career he was criticized by those who supported the notion of ‘faithful translation’, as he had added, reduced and adapted elements in the target text instead of following the source text closely. However, as translation was at its infancy stage during that period of time, translators were not expected to follow the source text closely. And by observation, a large number of the novels he translated had a specific message to relay to the readers. This dissertation has hence attempted to use *skopos* theory (functionalist school) to explain the translation scene in late Qing and early Republican China.

At the same time, this dissertation also examines a few of the translated novels in detail, to see whether the motive for translation has influenced the translator’s methodology. This study also looks into Lin Shu’s interest in Haggard’s contemporary adventure stories and how his style developed to preserve certain elements in his translations, despite accusations of his making groundless amendments.

Hence, Lin Shu should be labeled as the translation phenomenon at the turn of the century, not only introducing foreign literature into China, but also spurring literary modernization in China.