ABSTRACT

This Thesis attempts to study the English-Chinese translation of the imagery found in metaphorical expressions, from the perspective of its function and effect.

A figurative expression, for instance a metaphor, is to invoke a vision of the similarities between dissimilars. Thus, the effect of an image in a text is created via a perception of such similarities; and its effectiveness can be observed in terms of varying degrees of freshness, which in turn depend on the originality of the perception.

Images of figurative expressions observed in this Thesis are classified into three categories, namely dead, half dead and alive, according to their degrees of freshness. When these images are translated into another language, they may or may not retain the same degree of freshness in the process; in other words, there is the possibility that a translated image is viewed in a different light in a different culture and its freshness can either increase or decrease as a result. It is thus significant to point out that an image, when translated, has to observe the process of functional mapping, whereby the different components of the original image can be represented, in order to ensure that the translation is complete and thorough.

The results of our observations show that various factors can affect the translation of the function and effect of an image. Cultural difference between English and Chinese speakers is a major one which is frequently responsible for alteration or substitution of images in the process of translation. Linguistic difference can be another factor, as translators from time to time have to change the linguistic form of an image so it can be textually better accepted by the target language reader.

From the findings as mentioned above, it is concluded that translators, besides assessing the freshness of an image against the cultural and linguistic background of the source language text, have to take into consideration the realistic differences between the two cultures and languages concerned, and examine the image in the cultural and linguistic context of the target language text, in order to decide upon an effective rendition with matching freshness.