

Re-writing and Re-constructing British Culture: a Case study on Chinese Translations of a Concise Chinese-English Dictionary for Lovers

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Abstract

According to Chester man's causal model, three conditions can influence translators. At the same time, her/his translation may reveal her/his viewpoint toward the culture. The fiction *A Concise Chinese-English Dictionary for Lovers*, shortlisted for the Orange Broadband Prize for Fiction in 2007, is written by a Chinese female writer, Guo Xiaolu, about a love story between a young Chinese woman and an older English man. Through writing to the never-named man, the young girl gradually finds her own positioning and recognizes her stance in this relationship and in this foreign country. In this way, the "other" culture is constructed from a Chinese girl's standpoint and cultural differences on the one hand prompting her to seek her identity in the "other" culture, and on the other re-constructing the "otherness" in her writing. In translation, translators need to re-present the "other" culture from the standpoint of an outsider. In this study, we feel like learning how British culture is re-written and re-constructed by the Chinese girl in Chinese translations of the fiction. Versions produced by translation trainees and an official version published in 2008 will be studied to see how each translator rewrites and reconstructs cultural differences and the "otherness" in the novel.

Keywords: causal model, ideologies, Guo Xiaolu, culture re-presentation, A Concise Chinese-English Dictionary for Lovers

Introduction

Translation is regarded as a constrained activity (Holman & Boase-Beier, 1999: 7; Alvarez & Vidal, 1996: 2). Original writers are constrained by all manner of factors such as political censorship, social customs, and conventional poetic and linguistic styles. Similarly, translators are restricted by their source texts, and by constraints in the receptor context within which the target language exists. Such limitations and constraints may influence each translator's decisions in translation.

As translators read the original and (re)write it, they become intermediaries between the source and target cultures². Each translator, having her/his own distinctive viewpoints, may be expected to translate the source text in a particular and individual way; yet the personal perception and attitudes of each are often connected with social values and other external factors arising from the receptor context, and these may become a source of influence in the process of translation. If their translations are closely investigated, it may be relatively easy to identify traces of such influences in the translators' works.

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²Here the term 'culture' follows a general definition given in the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary as the customary beliefs, social forms and material traits shared by people in a place or time.

The novel *A Concise Chinese-English Dictionary for Lovers* illustrates a twenty-three-year-old Zhuang, from rural China, has come to London to study English. She calls herself Z because English people can't pronounce her name. Her immersion and painful education in the local culture begins through confusing cultural gaffes and grammatical mishaps, until an intense romance with a man she meets at the cinema. The relationship with the English man brings a number of cultural clashes to her life. And the young Chinese girl attempts to understand and to describe the world around through language barriers. However, through writing to the never-named man, the young girl gradually finds her own positioning and recognizes her stance in this relationship and in this foreign country.

Guo Xiao-lu's novel *A Concise Chinese-English Dictionary for Lovers* is an utterly original one about language, identity, and the cultural division. The novel was short-listed for Britain's 2007 Orange Prize and has attracted critics on this side of the pond as well. Due to the author's own experience relocating from China to London, the novelist a moving and mostly humorous narrative of cultural dislocation. It is a compelling story that offers many native English-users a brand new perspective on themselves and on their language. For her non-English readers, British culture is described from the perspective a Chinese girl, who understands the culture in her own way while mostly from the differences between the two cultures. In other words, the "other" culture is constructed from a Chinese girl's standpoint and cultural differences between two cultures in her writing on the one hand prompt the girl to seek her identity in the "other" culture, and on the other re-construct the "otherness" in her writing (Wu, 2009).

The study starts with questions about how and to what extent British culture has been doubly re-presented, that is, by the author, Zhuang Xiao-chiao, and then by the translator to Taiwan readers. How did a translator re-present British culture, the "otherness" from the perspective of a Chinese girl, Z, who not only acts as an outsider in the culture but understands the culture in her own way while mostly from the differences between the two cultures? In other words, the "other" culture is constructed from a Chinese girl's standpoint and cultural differences between two cultures in her writing on the one hand prompt the girl to seek her identity in the "other" culture, and on the other re-construct the "otherness" in her writing (Wu, 2009). Also we especially attempt to investigate if the translators' personal ideologies towards the "other" culture may influence the way s/he re-presented it in the translated version.

Versions produced by translation trainees and an official version published in 2008 by a professional translator surnamed as Guo, the same as the author, will be studied to see how each translator rewrites and reconstructs cultural differences and the "otherness" in the novel. From the text analysis, the study intends to find out if any different ideological stances in different translated versions. Was there any specific part of culture handled differently by the translators? If so, why was this topic translated differently from the others? Did any specific factors contribute to these differences in the translations? These are the questions that this study sets out to answer.

2. Literature Review

As intermediary between two cultures, a translator plays an essential role in the re-presentation of other cultures. The strategies or approaches adopted by the translator can at times highlight either the source or target culture by signaling differences between the two. In translation scholarship concerning re-presenting culture, we found examples of re-presentation of the original cultures using opposite approaches. Taking a famous case for example, the greatly domesticated translation of *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* indicates that the translator, Fitzgerald, adapted his translation to the receiving culture (Abdulla, 1999) at the expense of the Persian culture, and added British values. Fitzgerald's translation thus reprioritized the Persian literary style to fit into the target cultural framework of his time. According to Abdulla (1999), the translator's prioritizing domestic anticipation of foreign cultures led to the reshaping of Persian culture in the translation. Therefore the original Persian poetry in translation would be looked down upon as the other, the less cultured, the less educated and the less valued (Abdulla, 1999) as the translator applied Victorian poetics to 'improve' the original. In this case the translation could serve more as a demonstration of narcissism, confirming and reinforcing domestic values in the hegemonic receptor culture (Venuti, 1998: 159), while stereotyping the minor culture and rendering the other as subordinate.

We can find a similar case in the study by Polezzi (1998: 321) who reported that three Italian travel writers modified their writing in accordance with domestic ideologies, which also occurred in their English translations, in favor of attractive, exotic, mythical stereotypes that they created for Tibet.

Furthermore, over sixty translated works of Australian fiction published in France between the 1950s and the early 2000s were re-presented in order to be readable, accessible and transparent through a series of normative strategies (Frank, 2006). In Frank's study (2006), French translators had not merely appropriated and synthesized elements of Australian culture according to French cultural history; they portrayed Australia as an inhospitable and wild place of danger and adventure.

The tendency to adapt to the receptor culture is frequently addressed in translation scholarship. Nonetheless some translators are willing to bring their readers closer to the source culture, distinguishing the foreign culture from the domestic one. There are two examples of this. A study by Inggis (2003) found two translators, rather than adapting into the receiving Russian culture, chose to follow the original English cultural terms in order to preserve Christian morality. Another good example is shown by Megan Backus' English version of Banana Yoshimoto's *Kitchen* (Venuti, 1998: 84), which overtly favored the foreign zing strategy, which is contrary to the domesticating one. In this case, the translator retained many italicized Japanese words, which reminded English-language readers of the fact that the text in their hands was actually a translation. By her approach, the translator deviated from domestic norms and perceptions regarding the foreignness of the original (ibid: 87) and greatly reduced the stereotyped image of an exotic, incomplete and distant Japanese culture.

From these cases we can perhaps infer the ideological concerns the translator may have had during the translation process; nonetheless, we believe that there must be cases that fall between the poles, as there are yet other variables that influence translators in the course of their activity. Lane-Mercier (1997) provides us with a new perspective. In her opinion, the translators' standpoint towards cultural issues, suggesting their engagement in the source text, and the choices they make in translation may all be determining while handling the "otherness."

3. The model of causality

The model of causality proposed by Chesterman (2002), introduced and modified below, is applied as a theoretical framework for the researcher to investigate possible influential causes. The causal model, following Chesterman, enables the researcher to make some preliminary assumptions regarding possible reasons or factors that influence a translator when making specific decisions at a given time, and to interpret their motivation when doing so. As these factors are signaled through each translator's decisions in translation, the model therefore places the translator at the centre of the causal model. In addition, it helps the researcher to categorize the sources of these factors into various dimensions, levels of contingency and impacts. The following will briefly introduce the original concept of this model.

While this simple model of causality can be shown as 'CAUSES>>TRANSLATIONS>>EFFECTS,' Chesterman further distinguishes between levels of causality as 'socio-cultural,' 'situational,' and 'cognitive,' corresponding to the society, the group and the individual, as presented in Figure I. The socio-cultural conditions include norms, history, ideologies, languages, gender, race and other elements that exist in society and affect the production of translation. Situational conditions consist of the translation event, including the purposes of translation, source texts, facilities (e.g. laptops and printers), deadline and remuneration. They determine the material context in which translations are produced. The cognitive level means the 'translation act,' including the translator's knowledge, attitudes and self-image as a translator which will also influence their rendering of the source text. These levels of causality lead to a translation profile which can be seen reflected in its linguistic features. The linguistic items of the translation profile, influenced by the three levels of condition, thus have three levels of effect on readers' cognitive and behavioral states. The translated work may also generate responses within the target society, for example in general consumer behavior or the discourse regarding translation and the status of translators. Occasionally that influence may even extend into the political, cultural or religious dimensions of the target society.

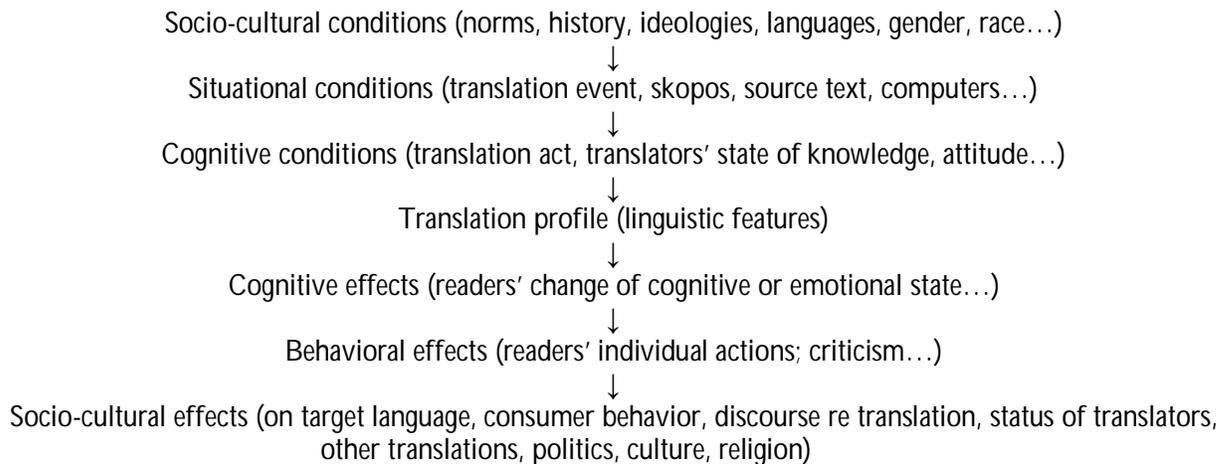


Figure 1: Chesterman's model of causality (2002)

Due to space limitations, the theoretical framework this study focuses upon the potential influences from three levels of condition and how factors in these three levels, to a greater or lesser extent, may have influenced a translator; especially when they were required to make decisions concerning linguistic items during the translation process.

4. Text analysis

This section will now proceed to the text analysis of Chinese versions of the novel *A Concise Chinese-English Dictionary for Lovers*, especially on descriptions concerning British culture. The study will investigate versions by translation trainees and an official version published in 2008 to see how each translator rewrites and reconstructs cultural differences and the "otherness" in the novel. The examples selected here will enable us to explore the translators' attitudes and understanding not only of the "other" culture, but of the perspective of the protagonist, the Chinese girl surnamed Zhuang. Some possible influences on their decisions are also suggested. Through examining these examples we shall gather information about each translator's level of understanding and awareness, and what may have been their ideological stance regarding culture issues. Each example is arranged with the source text first, followed by the official translation published in the year of 2008 and then the translator trainees' version(s) in the tables.

4.1 Example 1

In the beginning of the story, Zhuang keeps an account named 'alien,' to illustrate the day she arrives London. Everything to her is novel and hard to understand. In addition, this is the first time that she starts to be aware of the fact that she is like an alien here. Adding with poor English, she fidgets along the way.

Is unbelievable, I arriving London, "Heath low Airport". Every single name very difficult remembering, because just not "London Airport" simple way like we simple way call "Beijing Airport". Everything very confuse way here, passengers is separating in two queues.

Sign in front of queue say: ALIEN and NON ALIEN.

I am alien, like Hollywood film *Alien*, I live in another planet, with funny looking and strange language.

I am standing in most lonely and slowly queue with all aliens waiting for visa checking. I feel little criminal but I doing nothing wrong so far. My English so bad. How to do? (Guo, 2008: 9)

不敢相信，我人到了倫敦，「西斯洛機場」。好拗口的名字，怎不直接叫「倫敦機場，像我們那兒叫「北京機場」多省事。這裡樣樣讓人摸不著腦袋，旅客被分開排成兩條人龍。

人龍前頭分別標示：「外國」，「非外國」。

我是個外國，像好萊塢片子《異形》當中的外星人—長相荒誕，言語怪異。

站在漫長的隊伍裡，我跟所有的「外星人」一道等著查驗簽證。我感覺我是他們國家的犯罪嫌疑人，雖然我可沒犯什麼錯。麻煩的是：我的英語語詞不達意。怎辦(Guo, 2008: 3)？

<p>S1: 隊伍前有個牌子標著：「<u>外國人</u>」和「<u>本國人</u>」。</p> <p>我是外國人，就像好萊塢電影的異形，住在其他星球，有著好笑的長相還說著奇怪的語言。</p> <p>我排在最長、速度又最慢的隊伍後，跟其他外國人一樣等著入關。<u>感覺活像個罪人</u>，但<u>我又沒做什麼壞事</u>。<u>我的英文不好，等會我該怎麼辦？</u></p>	<p>S2: 隊伍前頭有牌子寫著：<u>外星人、非外星人</u>。</p> <p>我是外星人，就像好萊塢電影「異形」，我住在另一個星球，長相滑稽、講奇怪的語言。</p> <p>我站在幾乎沒有前進的一長列隊伍裡，跟著所有的外星人一起等待護照審視。我覺得自己有點兒像是<u>罪犯</u>，但，截至目前，我沒有做錯任何事。<u>我的英文實在很差，我應該怎麼辦？</u></p>
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For this example we tend to examine three terms. Firstly the original, 'ALIEN' is translated differently amongst three versions. For the official version, the term is rendered as '本國,' meaning 'domestic,' while the trainee's version '本國人,' reads more clearly and is easier to understand. It is the second trainee's version, '外星人,' arousing our attention for a discussion here. The trainee's term at a first glance is hilarious as we might intuitively believe the trainee just follows the meaning we learned from the textbook or what the dictionary tells him. It of course could be the main reason that the trainee picks up the term without paying more attention to the context. However, the effect this term creates could be much powerful than the other two versions as the term clearly indicates the difference between two cultures and also points out the loneliness and helplessness of the protagonist while entering this 'foreign' country.

For the other two terms, 'criminal,' and 'so bad,' in the original the protagonist thinks in her mind to describe herself and her poor English, we intend to focus on the official version. Comparing to the versions trainees produce, the translator Guo seems trying to make his translation explicit for his readers by giving supplementary information. The term 'criminal,' is translated as '犯罪嫌疑人,' meaning much closer to, 'crime suspect,' if we translate back into English while the other '詞不達意,' can be translated as, 'terms used hardly convey the meaning.' In this way, the translator could possibly intend to stress the inferior status to Westerners and incapability in English the protagonist feels about herself to target readers which could also create a contrast between the small Chinese girl to the image of a giant British. The translator's version could somehow foreshadow the cultural clashes and language barrier the protagonist may meet later on.

4.2 Example 2

Everything to Zhuang is new and unbelievable when she describes the English food in her diary. In an account titled, "[f]ull English Breakfast," we find her emotions mixed with surprise and confusion and she constantly compares what she sees in London to those back in China. Yet for Taiwan translators, they need to re-present what the author sees in London and its counterparts in China. In this way, they encounter two "otherness" in translation, although they could be more easily to understand and to imagine Chinese society.

I never seeing a *breakfast* like that. [...]. Food like messy scrambled eggs, very salty bacons, burned bread, very thick milk, sweet bean in orange sauce, coffee, tea, milk, juice. Church or temple should be like this, giving the generosity to normal people. But 8 : 30 in the morning I refuse accepting two oily sausage, whatever it made by pork or by vegetables, is just too fat for a little Chinese. (Guo, 2008: 16-7).

我從沒見過這種「早餐」。[...]。食物未免也豐盛過頭了，有費工的炒蛋，鹹培根，烤麵包，非常稠的牛奶，橙子醬燒甜豆，咖啡，茶，牛奶，果汁。教堂或寺廟像這樣該多好，餵飽無依無靠的老百姓。不過到了八點半我不行了，對於再來兩條油膩膩的香腸敬謝不敏，不管裡頭葷也好，素也好，總之，對一個中國小姑娘來說實在太油了(Guo, 2008: 9)。

<p>S1: 我從沒看過像那樣的早餐, [...]。早餐有炒蛋、鹹死人的培根、微焦的麵包、很濃的牛奶、醃柳橙醬的甜豆, 搭配咖啡、茶、牛奶或果汁。教堂跟寺廟也應該這樣, 大方提供這些給老百姓。可是才早上八點半, 我才不吃兩根油滋滋的香腸, 管他是葷的還素的, 對瘦小的中國人來說都太油了。</p>	<p>S2: 我從沒看過這樣的早餐, [...]供應如此豐盛的早餐, 例如炒蛋、過鹹的培根、烤麵包、濃稠的牛奶、加了柳橙醬的甜豆、咖啡、茶、牛奶, 還有果汁任君挑選。我認為寺廟或教堂也該布施這樣的食物給普羅大眾。但早上八點半我沒辦法吃下兩條油膩的香腸, 管它是葷的還素的, 因為對於嬌小的中國人來說實在太肥了。</p>
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For this example we have two terms for investigation. The first term 'normal people,' is translated differently in three versions. For trainee translators they chose '老百姓,' meaning 'ordinary people,' and '普羅大眾,' suggesting 'proletariats.' Perhaps out of carelessness, the trainee translator picks up the term meaning 'proletariats,' in his version which is not very appropriate to use here as the protagonist is not describing her hometown in China as a communism country but rather in a capitalist world. In contrast, the official version here again explicates the term by using, '無依無靠的老百姓,' meaning, 'poor people with nothing and no one to rely on.' Hence from the translation readers could not only easily get the meaning in this official version but also feels the sympathy of the protagonist supplemented by the translator.

For the second term, 'a little Chinese,' two trainee translators follows the original more closely than the official version. Yet the translator renders the term as '中國小姑娘,' meaning 'Chinese little girl,' indicating the protagonist herself. While the other two versions from trainee translators refer to general Chinese, the official version here seems narrowing the scope to the protagonist herself. In this way, the translators may intend to engage his readers into the mindset and the surrounding the protagonist is situated in the 'other' culture and invite readers entering the text world the protagonist builds.

4.3 Example 3

The example illustrates Zhuang's experience of going to a Chinese restaurant in London, titled '[v]egetarian.' She doesn't like the Chinese restaurant and surprisingly finds the restaurant is very different from the ones back home. The experience prompts her to think from a Briton's perspective and hence she starts thinking the stereotyped image concerning Chinese in this foreign country comes from. Additionally the shameful feeling again reminds her as a foreigner living in an 'other' culture. I swear I never been so rude Chinese restaurant in my entirely life. Why Chinese people becoming so mean in the West? I feel bit guilty for horrible service. Because I bring you, and you maybe thinking my culture just like this. Maybe that why some English look down of our Chinese. I am shameful for being a Chinese here. (Guo, 2008: 74-5)

我發覺這輩子還沒到過這麼粗魯的中國餐館。怎麼中國人到了到了西方變得如此小氣巴拉。服務態度糟糕到我有點內疚。因為是我帶你來的, 或許你會以為我們的文化就是這副德性。難怪有些英國人瞧不起我們中國人。在這地方身為中國人我直想找個洞來鑽。(Guo, 2008: 57)

S: 我發誓我長這麼大從沒去過服務差成這樣的中國餐廳。為什麼中國人在西方變這麼討厭? 這差勁的服務讓我有一點罪惡感。因為我帶你來, 你可能會覺得這就是我家鄉的文化。或許這就是為什麼有些英國人看不起中國人。在這裡, 我覺得自己是個中國人丟臉死了。

Two terms are our main focus in this example. For these two terms the official version again shows the translator's intention to domesticate for her readers by choosing more familiar terms and usage. For the term 'just like this,' the trainee translator simply skips it which is understandable as the term is applied here to stress the meaningful preceding word 'culture.' Hence the trainee translator, possibly due to insufficient experience of handling such term, makes the deletion while our translator adds some words, '就是這副德性,' to stress the way Chinese culture in the perspective of British people which in some way adds some negative meaning to describe 'us.' Criticizing one's own culture in the translation in a way contrasts two cultures and also reminds readers of the 'otherness' in the protagonist's mind.

For the second term, 'shameful,' our trainee translator's version, '丟臉死了,' with the meaning close to the original while our official version here, '我真想找個洞來鑽,' meaning 'I want to hide myself in a hole,' to suggest how embarrassing and shameful the protagonist feels when she sees the lousy service in the Chinese restaurant. The feeling she has in a way indicates the protagonist starts considering from a Briton's perspective rather than from her stance. She suddenly comes to realize why Chinese are always treated badly in this foreign society and somehow her confusion disappears. Readers of the official translation can learn the embarrassing feelings the protagonist has and her personal development through reflecting oneself.

4.4 Example 4

This example comes from the protagonist Zhuang's observation about British's linguistic taboo, '[f]art.' Here the protagonist again tells the difference about this term used in British and Chinese culture and gives the definition from the Chinese perspective.

I never hear English person says anything about fart. They must be too shameful to pronounce that sound. There are lots of words we used in China so often, but here people never use it. Even English dictionary say it is a "taboo" (Guo, 2008: 121).

我從沒聽過英國人提到任何跟 fart 有關的東西。他們一定太難為情了，連那個字的發音都不敢出聲。我們中國有成堆的字眼可以交替運用，但這裡的人只會避而不談。即便是英語辭典都說它是『禁忌』 (Guo, 2008: 89)。

S: 我從沒聽過英國人說到 fart 這個字，可能是覺得講出來太丟臉了，有很多字在中國常常講，但在這裡卻沒有人敢提，就連英文字典都說這是個「禁忌」。

For the underlined two sentences, we can see at the first glance different word counts in two versions. The trainee translator tends to follow the original without much engaging into the text world while the official translator again gives supplementary information in his version to describe something Britons won't say it out loud in public such the sentence, '連那個字的發音都不敢出聲,' meaning '[they] don't dare to pronounce that word.'

For the second line, the two versions suggest something differently. The official translation reads, '我們中國有成堆的字眼可以交替運用，但這裡的人只會避而不談,' meaning, 'we in China have a lot words to use interchangeably, but people here only avoid saying it out.' In other words, the protagonist tries to say the richer vocabulary Chinese have to replace the taboo words. However, in our trainee translator's version, '有很多字在中國常常講，但在這裡卻沒有人敢提,' meaning, 'a lot of words [we] often use in China, but here no one dares using them.' The version suggests that Chinese uses more tabooed words back in China but in Britain no one dares saying anything tabooed. It seems the insufficient understanding of the original and its context could have caused such a different in interpretation between the official and our trainee translator's version. The latter version seems to construct the British culture as a close society where people wouldn't touch any tabooed words while the former tries to lay more emphasis on the rich and abundant word choices Chinese have in comparison to the other culture.

4.5 Example 5

The increasing conflicts between our protagonist and her boyfriend lead to this account '[i]dentity.' In the passage she clearly points out difference between 'us' and 'you,' meaning Chinese and British culture. From her account, we know that some of the differences she actually learns from the 'other' culture. In other words, some features are not from her reflection but from the way she is treated in this foreign country.

The day when I arrived to the West, I suddenly realised I am a Chinese. As long as one has black eyes and black hair, obsessed by rice, and cannot swallow any Western food, and cannot pronounce the difference between "r" and "l", and request people without using *please*—then he or she is a typical Chinese: an illegal immigrant, badly treat Tibetans and Taiwanese, good on good but put MSG to poison people, eat dog's meat and drink snakes' guts (Guo, 2008: 186-7)

來到西方世界那天，我隨即明白自己中國人的身分。只要有黑眼珠黑頭髮，只要你嗜吃米食，嚥不下任何西方食物，「r」跟「l」的發音沒辦法分別，麻煩別人的時候不用請字—凡有這些症狀的他或她便是典型的中國人：一個非法的外來移民，粗暴對待西藏人或台灣人，東西好吃但專放味精害人，吃狗肉吞蛇膽。(Guo, 2008: 138)

S:到英國的那天，我才意識到我是個道道地地的中國人。只要是黑眼睛黑頭髮、嗜米成性、吃不慣西方食物、無法清楚發出 R 和 L 的音，麻煩別人總不愛加個「請」字，準是個典型的中國人。非法移民、惡意對待西藏人和台灣人、對食物很講究卻放瘦肉精毒害人民、喜歡吃狗肉，還喝蛇血。

Two items are under investigation in this example. The first is the 'MSG' in the original. While the official version translated the term as, '味精,' corresponding to the original, our trainee translator gives us a very interesting version, '瘦肉精,' meaning ractopamine, a term for one kind of lean mean agents. From this example we can suggest our trainee translator are greatly influenced by the socio-cultural condition in the causal model as coverage on ractopamine has become a hot topic in Taiwan society for a long period regarding food safety. Therefore, it is assumed that when our trainee translator comes across this term, he tends to think it as negative and something related to chemicals. And that could be the reason why he comes up with this term. Of course, this can also be suggested as a cognitive condition since the trainee translator's personal misunderstanding leads to a translation error here. Yet we assume the influence from the socio-cultural level could have greatly contributed to the trainee translator's decision.

The next term would deal more with the original, 'an illegal immigrant.' Similar to the previous case, 'a little Chinese,' here the official version is '一個非法的外來移民,' closer to the original while the trainee translator's version, '非法移民,' meaning 'illegal immigrant,' suggests something different between the lines. The official version identifies '一個,' telling readers the term is the protagonist's description of her own identity in this foreign country, while the reduction of the measure word makes the trainee translator's version apply to every Chinese. In this way the latter version enlarge the scope to indicate every one of Chinese in Britain is regarded as illegal immigrants. While the latter version could much reveal the gap and differences between two cultures, yet the former version could be more likely to engage its readers into the text world the protagonist is willing to build and the sense of hapless coming from a negative reputation in this culture.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The study sets out to investigate the way British culture is re-presented and re-constructed in Taiwan translation versions of the novel *A Concise Chinese-English Dictionary for Lovers*. The novel, written by a Chinese female writer, Guo Xiaolu, concerns a Chinese girl who goes to the UK to learn English for a year. The relationship with the English man brings a number of cultural clashes to the protagonist's life. However, through writing to the never-named man, the young girl gradually finds her own positioning and recognizes her stance in this relationship and in this foreign country. In this way, British cultures constructed from a Chinese girl's standpoint and cultural differences between two cultures in her writing on the one hand prompt the girl to seek her identity in the "other" culture, and on the other re-construct the "otherness" in her writing (Wu, 2009).

When it comes to translation, translators of this fiction have to reconstruct the 'otherness' of British culture from a Chinese female author. In addition, besides the British culture, Taiwan translators often have to re-present the culture in China, which is not always similar to that in Taiwan, because the protagonist constantly compares the differences between the other, i.e., British culture, and the self, i.e., the Chinese culture in her accounts. By investigating semantic shifts and translation strategies in a Taiwan official versions and ones by trainee translators, each translator's ideological considerations could be more or less revealed when we go back to suggest potential influences from Chesterman's causal model, upon their decisions. However, the potential influences upon the translator could only be assumed by the researcher based on his translation. Of course, the study cannot give a generalized idea about the potential influences upon translators. The causal model is applied only to explain what we find in this case study.

From the five examples raised for text analysis, we find two main features in the official translation in comparison to the versions by trainee translators.

Firstly, the official translation seems to domesticate for its intended readers in Taiwan by explicit ting many critical terms with supplementary information. For example, the original, "my English is bad," is translated as, "我的英語語詞詞不達意," meaning, "my English phrases cannot convey the meaning," which further explains the protagonist's English level in this foreign country. To give another example, the original, 'embarrassing,' is translated in the official version as, '我真想找個洞來鑽,' indicate the shameful feeling the protagonist has and realizes why the negative image is always impinged upon the Chinese in Britain after experiencing the rude service in the Chinese restaurant. Secondly, the official translation tends to invite its readers into the protagonist's text world. It could be suggested by the generic terms in the original such as, 'a little Chinese,' or, 'an illegal immigrant.' In this way, the translator again engages his readers much more in the text world the protagonist builds in her diary and therefore his readers could in a way much empathize the feeling the protagonist has in the 'other' culture. The reason behind the domestication, similar to Polezzi (1998), could be that the translator tends to enlarge the differences between two cultures to reinforce the gap between 'otherness' and 'us,' as illustrated in the protagonist's diary. Or the translator tends to give a much readable, accessible, and understandable story for his readers.

In comparison to the official translation, translations by trainee translators tend to follow the original closely. Yet sometimes the trainee translators failed to detect the connotation between the lines by the protagonist, leading to a different picture of British culture. For example, when describing the taboo word 'fart,' the trainee translator's version gives an impression that people in British culture is more reserved in using tabooed words than those in Chinese society because the former do not have rich vocabulary as the latter do. In addition, versions by trainee translators seem to generalize the hapless situation the protagonist is at comparing to the whole Chinese. In this way readers tend to regard what happens to the protagonist as a general attitude Britons have towards all Chinese. Their versions may end up with portraying Britain as a hostile place especially for all Chinese.

When it comes to influences upon translators, in this case study we find trainee translators could be easily influenced by socio-cultural and situational conditions. In other words, from their versions the original term, "MSG," becomes, "瘦肉精," suggesting the influences from news coverage which led them to the term without much thought about the original. Adding with the tight deadline requested by the researcher-instructor, they may not have enough time to consult their dictionary or engage themselves in the text world the protagonist tries to build for her readers. Additionally the cognitive reasons could have contributed to the trainee translators' versions in ways that they failed to detect certain implications between the lines, possibly out of inexperience in taking translation jobs. On the other hand, for the official translator, the researcher also assumes that his personal ideological stance toward the British and Chinese culture could have been closer than that of our trainee translators, while his personal understanding may trigger his use of supplementation and exploitations for his readers. It could be based on his general understanding of his target readers, or to put it more specifically, the impression readers in Taiwan society of British and Chinese culture gives him. Yet it could also be possible that this official translation has been modified and reviewed by the publisher. Hence, three levels of conditions could have worked together to contribute to the final translation, although we assume the translator's personal factors should have been the greatest impact upon his translation.

However, as the causal model formulated by Chesterman focuses more on the top-down influences between levels than the reciprocal impacts between levels, the real situation may indeed be more complicated than the simple linear chain shown in the diagram would suggest. For example, a translators' cognition may be influenced directly by the socio-cultural dimension of the target readers that they may have to take into consideration during the process. Similarly, the finished translation profile could directly influence or even challenge the prevailing conditions or perceptions of certain issues in the target society. The following section discusses the version as modified for use in this study.

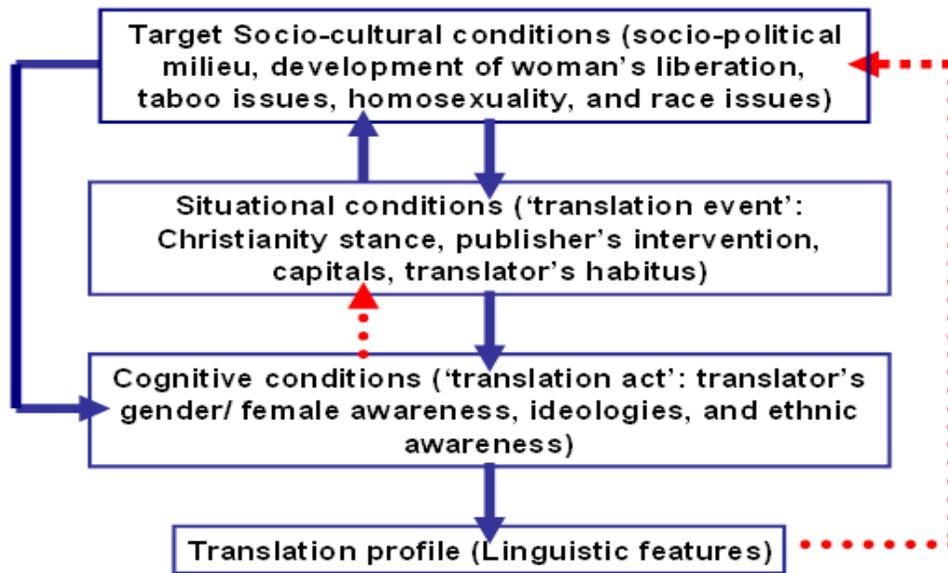


Figure II: The modified version of the causality model

The study further revised the model for use by changing the direction of influence from linear to interactive, as indicated by the arrows in Figure II. As argued earlier, socio-cultural conditions may not only influence the situational ones but also the cognitive dimension of the translator, as a member of the receiving society. Moreover, the situational conditions in translation may affect both the social-cultural environment and, at the same time, the translator. By the same token, translation profiles could at times have an influence upon the society. Using this revised model the research is better able to explore the three translations in depth, and more comprehensively suggest the variables operating on the translators' decisions while they were translating the original.

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