

## Communicative Purposes in Translational Activities: A Functional Study on Target Prefaces and Postscripts

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**Abstract:** This is an application study<sup>1</sup> of Functionalism from the perspective of communicative translation. Translation in its nature introduces a foreign culture into a local one, and Functionalism deals with how the communicators adapt the foreign attributes to the local culture. The paper will examine a total of three prefaces and one postscript attached to the Chinese translations of *The Making of a Hero* and *Gone with the Wind*. Through text analysis, typical communicators, including initiators, commissioners, editors, and translators in a translational activity, will be identified, and their roles as cultural ambassadors will be explained. The conclusion is that Functionalism puts a translational activity into the socio-cultural context where it occurs, and regards it as a cross-cultural activity. Like other cross-cultural communications, a translational activity involves the key elements in a successful communication between cultures. The purpose of this cultural translation is often pre-determined, and all participants in the translational activity work together to realize the purpose in the target culture.

**Keywords:** Functionalism, communicative purpose, *Gone with the Wind*, Nikolai Ostrovsky, preface, postscript, translation Skopos

### 1. Introduction

The present paper is an application study of Functionalism in the field of communicative translation. The Functionalist model distinguishes itself from other translation theories as it focuses on the communicative nature of translational activities which, inevitably, take place under certain sociocultural circumstances. Translation therefore expands its function to an action of trans-cultural communication rather than word-to-word rendering. In other words, the social effect of any translational activity is to communicate between cultures. Being a dialogue between one culture and another, translating is a process when the source culture manifests itself in the target culture. And Functionalism explores this process by identifying the purposes, communicators, target receivers of the information, sponsors, and means of this special medium of cross-cultural communication.

The Functionalist model has emerged and evolved thanks to four scholars and their theories. Katharina Reiss's (2000, 2004) "text-typology" is the theory from which the model originates. Reiss classifies texts into types, namely, informative, expressive, and operative. She holds that the functional category is the main criterion for evaluating purposeful translations.

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<sup>1</sup> This paper reports the research findings of the project titled 'Functionalist Approaches in Translation Studies', supported by the Fundamental Research Funds for the Central Universities.

Hans Vermeer (2000) and his “Skopostheorie” later became the framework of the model. For Vermeer, translation is a type of human action, an intentional purposeful behavior that takes place in a given situation, and any action has an aim, a purpose, which can be called by the word *Skopos*. Justa Holz-Mänttari and her “translational action theory” (Holz-Mänttari, 1984; Nord, 2001), largely extended the model itself. Holz-Mänttari proposes to analyze the roles of the participants and the situational conditions in which translational activities take place. She emphasizes the special function of translation in communicating across cultures. Last but not least, Christiane Nord (1992, 1993, 1997, 2000, 2001, 2005) and her theory of “function plus loyalty” integrated the ideas mentioned above as a whole. Nord insists that dynamic coherence, rather than literal equivalence, is the yardstick of translation. Functions vary according to communicative intentions. Nord also made great contribution to expanding the influence of Functionalism as she translated the representative works of the above three theorists from German to English.

The study will focus on prefaces and postscripts of Chinese translations. Studies on prefaces and postscripts are not rare, but research combining the theme with translation studies does not abound. However, their research value from the perspective of translation studies should by no means be underestimated because they provide important information about the translation production. Typically, the content of prefaces and postscripts might include a review of the original work, insight into the source text, prediction of the response from the translation readers, motive of putting the source text into the target language, participants in the translational activity, translation methods, as well as the social context where the translation occurs. In a word, prefaces and postscripts provide reading guidance which instructs how the readers should understand the target text. And the guidance will help picture how social and cultural conditions influence the translation process, what the participants consider in the translational activity, and how ideology manipulates the translation production.

Through analysis of the prefaces and postscripts, the paper answers how a translational activity fulfills its job in communicating inter-culturally. For a translation to function effectively in the target culture, several factors must be included in the dynamic process of the translational activity: initiator, content, translation medium, translation strategy, target readers, aim of translation, social context and effects. These factors literally derive from the field of cross-cultural communication, which concerns the following aspects: who communicates, what is communicated, to whom, for what purpose, in what circumstances, in what way, and with what effects does the communication take place? (Zhang, 2003).

In this paper, *The Making of a Hero* [*Gangtie shi zenyang liancheng de*] and *Gone with the Wind* [*Piao*] are chosen as the source texts, from which three prefaces and one postscript will be analyzed. To be specific, three Chinese translations of the Soviet novel *The Making of a Hero* (1976/1995/1999) and one of the American novel *Gone with the Wind* (1984) are examined. The texts are selected according to the following two criteria: first, the translator/editor elaborately describes the entire translation process, so that enough textual evidence can be found for analyzing the activity; second, editions from the same source book are chronologically varied in order that each comes from a typical social background that differentiates itself from the others.

## 2. Literature Review

Reiss (2000) classifies source texts into three text types: informative, expressive, and operative, which is limited a lot when the idea is later fitted into Vermeer's framework of general translation, because the text-typology theory is effective only when the function of the source text conforms with the function of the target text (Sager, 1997). Therefore, Reiss (2004) leans towards the functional approaches when evaluating translations, and points out that the functional category is the guiding principle for judging purposeful renderings which are intended to fulfill a special function absent in the original (p. 93).

Vermeer seeks for a more general theory. He points out that any translational action has a purpose, just like any other human actions (Vermeer, 2000). He puts translation within the framework of a comprehensive theory of human communication. He firstly uses the term "Skopos", which is a Greek word meaning aim or purpose. The Skopostheorie is thus a theory of purposeful activities. The addressees who are the intended receivers and audience become a decisive factor for Skopos (Vermeer, 1989, p. 20, qtd & trans. Nord, 2001, p. 29).

Nord introduces Holz-Mänttari's theory in her book *Translating as a Purposeful Activity*, as the original theory is written in German. Holz-Mänttari holds that the purpose of translational action is for translators to transfer messages across cultural and linguistic barriers (Holz-Mänttari, 1984, p. 10, qtd. Nord, 2001, p. 13). She places special emphasis on the actional quality of translation, and on the vocational status of the translators (experts), by means of analyzing the roles of the participants (including the initiator, the commissioner, the source text producer, the translator, the target text user, and the target text receiver) and the situational conditions in which their activities take place (Nord, 1992).

Nord insists that equivalence not be the only yardstick of translation, and function accounts for variation in methods and strategies in different translation situations. Functions vary according to communicative intentions. She then brings the principle of loyalty into the Functionalist frame to avoid the tendency of abandoning the source text. In her theory of function plus loyalty, function refers to the factors that make a target text work in the intended way, while loyalty limits the range of justifiable target text functions (Nord, 1993, 1997, 2001).

Functionalism is a term essentially used to cover the four scholars' sub-theories which combine to outline the communicative nature of translational activities.

Functionalism is considered to be a relatively new branch in the field of translation. An overview of the functionalist model has been introduced in China (Bian, 2009; Wei, 2007). Theoretical studies on Nord (Fan, 2009) and Reiss (Hu, 2010) have also been undertaken in recent years. Some researchers have started to focus on cultural features of the model (Lu & Zhang, 2009), while some others find application of the theory to news translation (Chen, 2007; Chai, 2011), translation pedagogy (Bian, 2011), and business translation (Qi, 2008). However, it cannot be denied that research on functional translation into Chinese lags behind European studies in general, and the scope of research is limited compared with foreign studies on this issue (Bian, 2009).

Being an important development of translation studies, translation theories dealing with the cultural nature of translation can be found in recent studies, including Gentzler (2004), Shuttleworth & Cowie (2004), Lefevere (2004), and Baker (2000), and they have developed

the concept of inter-cultural communication into a key factor in negotiating between cultures in translation. Translation officially stops taking equivalence as the only rule, and starts to recognize functions other than carrying over the original meaning. This new development comes from the belief in the innovative nature of language, as language necessarily creates something new in a different context with different referents. In this sense, the traditional notion of translation as carrying over original information is too restrictive, and has caused translation to fall into unintended equivalences. In fact, translation can perform an act of rewriting, making the foreign familiar, providing the target readers with the experience of recognizing their own culture in the foreign culture, and enacting a kind of cultural domestication, one that preserves social hierarchies, maintains political norms, and conforms to religious conceptions.

### 3. Analysis

The former Soviet Union novel *The Making of a Hero* (Ostrovsky, 1976) and its author Nikolai Ostrovsky find their second homeland in China. The original Russian source (*Kak zakalyalas' stal'*) first appeared with two parts in the magazine *Young Guard*, the first part published in 1932 and the second in 1934. The novel was published in 1936 in book form and this edition is commonly regarded as the established version. The novel and the story of the writer have influenced generations of Chinese people. It has been on the booklist of the most inspiring works suggested by parents and schools for decades. There have been more than twenty translation versions of the book. Among them, three Chinese translations will be analyzed to picture the typical procedure of a translational activity as well as the participants in it. The selection of the translations takes textual evidence and chronic variation into consideration, so that each preface/postscript provides a unique perspective of the socio-cultural background where the translation took place. Later, a closer look will be taken at how a translator produces the target text with its intended function by studying the preface of *Gone with the Wind* (Mitchell, 2008). The book is chosen because the preface of the book offers an explicit and detailed description on the manipulation of target readers and target culture, which is not obviously seen in any translation of *The Making of a Hero*. As a productive translator, Fu Donghua has faithfully reported his consideration of rewriting in the preface of *Gone with the Wind*.

#### 3.1. The Initiator's Selection of the Source Text – Who Starts the Communication and What Is Communicated?

According to the Functionalist model, there is an initiator in a translational activity. The paper will take the preface of *The Making of a Hero* published in 1976 as an example to unveil the initiator's purpose. It is difficult, however, to identify the initiator in the first place. What is even odder is that the translators are not specified in this book. There is only a vague concept about a group of people from college who have translated the book into Chinese. The *publishing instruction* mentions that some workers, college students and teachers composed the preface of the translation after consideration and discussions (Anonymous, 1976, p. 2).

Two points are worth analyzing here: the anonymity of translators, and the special identity of the foreword writers. The anonymous translators' invisibility can be for two reasons. One

assumption is that the translation is done by an organization, so it is inappropriate either to cite a few names or to note down all of them. Another possibility is that the translators are made to appear as a group rather than several isolated names. The reasons may sound confusing but the special social context back in 1976 which will be pictured later may justify them. As for the preface writers, the identities of workers and college people are unusual considering the fact that in the 1970s, workers were entitled to an honorable and administrative class. The workers were the technicians in factories that were scanty but important after the foundation of PRC. The writers represented knowledge, new techniques, power, and ideally, they represented common people in China. Hence, it can be understood that the reason for both the anonymity of the translators and mentioning the status of the preface writers is rooted in the particular socio-cultural context. And it is reasonable to believe that the preface writers, whoever they really are, are the initiators that started the translational activity. This unusual issue introduces a further discussion on the translation Skopos, i.e., what is the initiator's objective.

To start with, the purpose of the translation is pre-determined, and as the intended function the preface communicates, is highly class-conscious. The preface of the 1976 version starts with a citation from Lenin: "The world's history always persists firmly in evolving towards the dictatorship of the proletariat, even though the path is full of obstacles and difficulty" (Anonymous, 1976, p. 1) <sup>2</sup>. The following paragraph states that Ostrovsky finished writing the novel in spite of paralysis and visual handicap. Then the preface goes on to convince the readers that from the inspiring novel it can be concluded that struggling and brave fighting are needed for guarding and enhancing the dictatorship of the proletariat, that Communism is worth people's valuable lives, and that people should love the dictatorship of the proletariat and fight against Revisionism. The preface of the translation puts special emphasis on political influences. From the beginning, the preface takes the novel as a textbook for the dictatorship of the ruling class. Generally speaking, the preface writers introduce the novel in such a purposeful way that the book's primary function is spiritual encouragement rather than literature. From the above information it can be inferred that in this translational activity, the initiator's goal is to inspire and teach the target text receivers into devoting themselves to the grand career of Communism with determination and courage. The target text user is quite possibly the authority, which is also the initiator who assigns the translator the task of rendering the book. The target text receivers are apparently young Chinese people. In a word, the nature of this translation which the preface communicates is a purposeful activity with a pre-determined function, which the official power initiates.

Moreover, the source text is chosen in such a way that the novel is meant to motivate the youths into pro-communist action. The summary of the plot is apparently politically biased. There is an obvious partiality in favor of the Soviet governing system and the Bolshevik party. As the preface puts it, the October Revolution opens a new era in human history, which evokes the hatred of the capitalist class and other enemies, in hope of crushing the revolutionary bud. Repression, disruption, espionage, and barbarity fill the air with poison which erodes the

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<sup>2</sup> The original text in Chinese is: 世界歷史始終不渝地走向無產階級專政，但它所走的遠不是平坦筆直的大道。

revolutionists' resolution. In spite of this, Lenin and his Bolshevik proletarians bravely fight for and finally win the regime anyway through sanguinary or bloodless battles, by ferocious or peaceful means, in terms of military power and economic construction (Anonymous, 1976, p. 6). The book portrays a typical Communist hero, Pavka Korchagin. He devotes his life to glorious struggles against Imperialism and passes down the spirit of a revolutionary generation. The book is an autobiographic novel. The author and his hero both suffer from blindness and bodily mutilation out of wounds in battles. After that, they both write revolutionary novels. Pavka is not born to be a hero. "Pavka's experience vividly shows that a revolutionary youth cannot voluntarily grow into a proletarian pioneer. Only with the help of the Communist party, [...] is he able to become a devoted Communist soldier and reliable successor of the proletarian career" (Anonymous, 1976, p. 8)<sup>3</sup>. That communicates the intention of selecting the source text: it is supposed to be an educational text to uplift the spirit of the youths to persist on the road towards the dictatorship of the proletariat and the leadership of Communist party. The translation aims to enlighten the target text readers with the revolutionary spirit of the hero. The goal is to build an imaginary role model by combining the stories of Pavka and Ostrovsky together. The intended function, the aim, and the goal altogether manifest the political translation Skopos: the target text must prepare young people for fighting against anti-communism.

The Skopos may seem difficult to accept today, but it should be reiterated that 1976 was a very special year for Chinese people. China was in the middle of "the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" that began in 1966 and ended in 1976. That was a period allowing nothing but pure proletarian spirit. The theme of the book perfectly suits China's situation, so it is translated to meet the special needs in 1976. Therefore, it is safe to conclude that the selection of a certain genre depends on the communicative Skopos that in turn is influenced by a significant historical event.

Determined by the communicative purpose, some values of the source text are not properly translated and, accordingly, questionable in the target text. According to the review of the novel expressed in the preface, "admittedly, *The Making of a Hero* is an outstanding revolutionary literary work written in 1930s in the Soviet Union. However, some ideological and artistic quality is subject to criticism in the eyes of the translation initiators at the time" (Anonymous, 1976, p. 8). "For example, the novel is insufficient in analyzing the class-consciousness of some leading characters; there is too much description on Pavka's romance with the heroine; also, Pavka reveals some kind of desperation when he is physically disabled before his book is published. Those flaws contaminate the image of Pavka in a sense" (Anonymous, 1976, p. 9)<sup>4</sup>. Today, readers may find the criticism too harsh. Why is it necessary to make comments on someone's class-consciousness anyway? Love and desperation are natural human emotions

<sup>3</sup> The original text in Chinese is: 保爾成長的道路，深刻表明：一個青年，不可能自發地成為無產階級的先鋒戰士。只有在黨的領導下，[……]（才能）成為共產主義奮鬥終身的自覺戰士，成為無產階級革命事業的可靠接班人。

<sup>4</sup> The original text in Chinese is: 《鋼鐵是怎樣煉成的》是蘇聯三十年代的一部優秀的革命文學作品，但這部作品在思想性和藝術性方面，也還存在着某些不足之處。例如：小說對[……]缺少階級分析；在關於保爾與冬妮亞結識與相愛的描寫中，渲染較多；在描寫保爾喪失健康和他的作品尚未出版時，流露了某種絕望情緒。這些都在一定程度上影響了主人公形象的塑造。



which are undeniable. The description of emotion is indispensable in novels as long as what the authors want is more than flat characters. The description actually adds credibility to the story. The explanation of the phenomenon is that those are the factors that don't conform to the communicative purpose. The target text culture welcomes the revolutionary quality but does not accept the romantic affection as well.

### 3.2. The Commissioner's Organization of the Translational Activity – In What Circumstance

As is explained earlier in the paper, loyalty to the original text may not be the primary principle in translation in some cases. The aim of a translational activity can be closely related to political, economic, social, cultural and academic trends. As a matter of fact, possible purposes of a translation vary greatly, and passing on the ideas from the source text author is only one of them. The next question is then, in what circumstance can the original idea be faithfully communicated cross-culturally.

The postscript of the 1995 translation of *The Making of a Hero*, compared with the 1976 preface, is less political but more literary. Translation and publishing information is clearly introduced. The translator's name is Mei Yi. The book is translated from Alec Brown's English version named *The Making of a Hero* (Ostrovsky, 1937) published in New York, 1937<sup>5</sup>. The book in Chinese is revised and proof-read by Liu Liaoyi according to the Russian version. The postscript is also written by the translator. Apparently, the translational activity is well organized, as each member in the team is assigned a task. Nevertheless, transparency of the translation information does not mean the translational activity has no communicative purposes.

One thing that cannot be ignored is that a return to the original genre of the source text is stressed in the postscript, which equally proves the manipulative nature of communicative purposes in translational activities. The translator fills half of the length of the postscript with an explanation of what he is concerned with in his translation, such as the version his rendition is based on, and the fact that he has had his translation proof-read and revised five times before publishing. His aim is to convey the idea that he takes the established source text into serious consideration so as to return as much as possible to the original novel (Mei, 1995, pp. 491-492). This shows an academic attitude towards the translation task. In the meanwhile, the new edition is supposed to give an objective narration in hopes of correcting the alterations made to the earlier version, which shows that one of the communicative purposes is to go back to the source text.

Moreover, a positive influence is expected by the translation organizers ahead of the translational activity. The target text receivers are apparently the Chinese youths. As the postscript writer quotes, "Young people in China love reading this novel, which is proved by the number of copies so far sold. That remains true whether before or after the Great Cultural Revolution. [...] A survey on the most well-received literature works among college students

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<sup>5</sup> A later translation into English of this Russian novel (*Kak zakalyalas 'stal'*) used the English title *How the Steel Was Tempered*. (Ostrovsky, 1952/2002).

shows that *The Making of a Hero* wins the third place, and Pavka Korchagin is their favorite novel character” (Mei, 1995, p. 493)<sup>6</sup>. Besides, the intended function of the target text is also clearly stated in the postscript, which is to set up a role model for the young people, especially college students. “This book has influenced and educated the generations in the forties and fifties, and it is still a good book for today’s youths” (Mei, 1995, p. 493)<sup>7</sup>. Compared with the earlier version, the mission is less political but is still organized around a given objective.

Last but not the least, the situational condition of the society remains a crucial determinant in translational activities. As the society becomes more open, the postscript shows a change in attitude towards Pavka’s love affair. He is no longer intentionally portrayed as a typical superhero with iron will. The book even admits that he has shortcomings in personality and he makes mistakes. This makes the character look more realistic and human. Though the evaluation on the hero maintains its focus on his growth through difficulties, the postscript is more about encouraging people to live up to their dreams. Throughout the whole postscript, the concept of class is never mentioned, nor is the proletarian dictatorship. The communicative purpose is to support the young people to choose their personal life goals and then persist and work hard on them.

All in all, the turnover of the communicative purposes is deeply rooted in the social context. When the target culture identifies itself closer to the source culture, fidelity can be better preserved in a translational activity. Specifically, ideological attitudes in China have been in constant change since 1950s. During the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, China was experiencing a fast development in economy, politics and many other aspects of social life. The concept of modernization also allows and constantly stimulates affluence in material, cultural and ideological life. Class antagonism has lost its throne. The commissioner of the translational activity in 1995 takes it as the communicative purpose to shape people with ethics, and to encourage people with literary works. Shifting from revolutionary resolution to personality education, the communicative purpose shows a change of the socio-cultural background over time. The translator accordingly feels less pressure from non-literary influences, and hence claims to stick to the source text.

### 3.3. The Editor’s Materialization of the Skopos – For What Purpose and with What Effects

As is stated above, translation involves alteration and re-writing of the source text. The effect is that the partiality of the translation prevents the target readers from getting a proper picture of the source culture. On the other hand, faithfulness to the source text without catering to the target readers encourages variety in understanding the source culture.

By the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, although several editions of *The Making of a Hero* were still

<sup>6</sup> The original text in Chinese is: 我國的青少年是愛讀這本書的，上面提到的發行冊屬說明了這一點。“文化大革命”前是如此，“文化大革命”後來也如此。[……]（調查）指出，大學生們最喜歡的中外作品中，《鋼鐵是怎樣煉成的》佔第三位，而在他們最喜歡的文藝作品的主人公中，保爾·柯察金佔第一位。

<sup>7</sup> The original text in Chinese is: 這部書不僅在四五十年代影響和教育了一代人，對今後的青少年也會起很好的導向作用。



on the bookstore shelves, the editor's choice of publishing a new Chinese translation in 1999 was well justified by the reasons provided by the preface of the new edition. The publishing committee organized translators to re-translate some of the world-famous literary works, including *The Making of a Hero*, to form a new collection. The reasons were two-fold: firstly, literary works are so valuable and powerful in reflecting the social life that they have had an enormous impact on generations of people. Literary cultures should be inherited. Therefore, people can enjoy the classics and enrich their lives with the wits the books have offered. Secondly, some pieces were translated in classical Chinese before simplified characters and vernacular Mandarin were commonly used. People today stumble and stammer when they read those old books (Song, 1999). The first reason reflects the initiator's intention, while the second communicates the commissioner's purpose. Later, the preface explicitly states the translation Skopos, which manifests the communicative purpose of the new translation: the committee has the works re-translated in order to promote the youths' sense of appreciating literature, and to widen their horizon with global history, cultures, customs, and societies (Song, 1999).

Evidently, the editor has executed the initiator's and the commissioner's decision by following the translation Skopos. In fact, the editor, who also claims to be the preface writer, puts it very clearly that he will not direct the addressees how to read the books, or more precisely, how to understand them. "There is a brief introduction in the preface of each book, but deeper comprehension relies on the readers' careful appreciation" (Song, 1999, p. 4)<sup>8</sup>. This attitude is evidently neutral as the initiator, the commissioner, and the editor are apparently supporting multiple ways of digging into the works. Being a sign of individualism, encouragement of free reading started making its way into people's lives by the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As can be seen from the previous analysis in this paper, there was conventionally a reading direction to lead the target text receiver to a pre-determined way of understanding the book, so as to prevent "misreading". Yet this new 1999 edition affirms the receiver's right to explore the ideas alternatively. This neutrality, however, hardly indicates an absence of a communicative purpose. On the contrary, the new purpose is to correct the previous reading instructions, and to encourage variety in individual understanding. The purpose is effectively realized by the editor. As a matter of fact, readers find varied themes in the story: heroism, male subjectivity, power, and bodily integrity, among others. It has to be admitted that the 1999 edition has taken a literary, even academic stance in translating the novel.

Despite the short time interval between the 1999 version and the 1995 version, they are not exactly the same in terms of social backgrounds. The social context of 1995 was promoting Modernization. This didn't mean people had to charge towards the enemy seventeen times a day, or to build a railway in spite of the physical torture of typhoid, as is described in the novel. But Pavka's vigor of struggling, devotion, and being steadfast and earnest in work remained the theme of the time. In 1999, China was developing fast in its economy. The government adopted a mild position and allowed much more freedom in material, spiritual and cultural life. Professionals as well as ordinary readers since then have been provoked to study the aesthetic value of texts with few political restrictions.

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8 The original text in Chinese is: 在每本名著之前，還會有簡明扼要的介紹，更深切的理解和體會，只有您們仔細去品讀了。

### 3.4. The Translator's Practice of Translation – Decoding and Re-Encoding as the Process of Communicating between Cultures

While the framework is set by the initiator, the commissioner, and the editor, it is the translator who realizes the communicative purpose by translating. It is foreseeable that, to communicate the translation purpose, the translator will not render the text in a word-by-word manner. Traditional translation theories often fail to explain the phenomenon, while Nord's (1992, 1993, 1997, 2000, 2001, 2005) text analysis model displays a unique theory of interpreting the source text. The model takes a panoramic view of the whole text rather than on the level of sentences or words. This may sound unfamiliar in translation theories, but it is widely adopted by translators in practice. In this part, the paper will take Fu Donghua's (1984) translation methods noted in the preface of *Gone with the Wind* as an example, to demonstrate how the translator communicates the purpose in his translation practice. Though it is not the only translation of *Gone with the Wind* into Chinese, other versions will not be included in the paper. The main reason is that other translations of the novel do not effectively describe the translation process in prefaces/postscripts.

In the process of translating, two steps are considered essential: understanding and expressing. In terms of intercultural communication, understanding is decoding and expressing is re-encoding (Ma, 2003, p. 15). The first step is the process of understanding the lexical meaning of the source language and the culture-loaded information it conveys. The second step is the process of re-producing the text in such a way that the source information is effectively communicated into the target culture. Therefore, translation is a channel coming from one cultural situation and going into another. More than word-to-word rendering, the translator's job is to set up a dialog between cultures.

Critics may easily find that Fu has greatly changed the source text, which is assumed to be a non-professional way of translating. But from a cultural point of view, Fu fulfills his responsibility as a translator in the sense that he informs his prospective readers with his translation methods. Domestication, reduction and addition of information are the strategies he often employs, and idiomatic expressions are frequently used. His translation strikes the readers with the impression that it is just a love story with short sentences that cater for Chinese reading habits. Judged by traditional translation criteria, his production is not faithful to the original novel. As Fu (1984) has proclaimed in the preface, "if critics cavil at my translation and find faults in sentences, I here appreciate their kindness beforehand" (p. 442)<sup>9</sup>. Nevertheless, as a model of translation, Functionalism allows situations of non-equivalence provided that the translator is loyal to the translation purpose. As long as translation is seen as a trans-cultural communicative interaction, emphasis must be put on the text's intended function in the target culture. Forms, strategies and methods are all subject to the function of the target text.

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<sup>9</sup> The original text in Chinese is: 倘使批評家們要替我吹毛求疵，說我某字某句譯錯了。那我預先在這裡心領謹謝。

### 3.4.1. Target Readers – To Whom does the Communication Take Place?

Margaret Mitchell's novel *Gone with the Wind* had been filmed before the novel was translated into Chinese. The 1939 Hollywood movie was a success in China and gained its fame as a wonderful love story. The movie was very well accepted in China except that it was commonly regarded as a movie of romance rather than one picturing a country at war. The Chinese name of the movie, *Beauty in Turbulent Days*, and the movie poster with Clark Gable holding Vivien Leigh tight in his arms, misled the audience in a sense. With accumulated praises from the audience, there was an urgent demand for the novel in the form of a book. Consequently, Fu translated the novel to meet the demand from the audience, who were not really expecting a serious piece of literature which would devote quite a portion of the book to describing the American Civil War. Considering the expectation from the target text receiver, Fu categorized the novel as a romance.

### 3.4.2. Translation Skopos and Commission – For What Purpose does the Communication Take Place?

Fu (1984) clearly writes down the translation Skopos in the preface: "In a word, my aim is to grasp the entertaining quality of the book, instead of being faithful to trivialities" (p. 442)<sup>10</sup>. His reason is also explained: he doesn't treat this book as a classic, and he is afraid that readers will get bored if he adopts the word-to-word translating approach (Fu, 1984).

### 3.4.3. Translation Strategy – Through Which Channel does the Communication Take Place?

In the very first line of the preface, Fu (1984) expresses his concern for employing the instrumental translation (to use Nord's term). "About the translation method in this book, I have to ask for some freedom from the readers" (p. 442).<sup>11</sup> Instrumental translation (Nord, 1992, 1993, 1997, 2000, 2001, 2005) is a key concept in Nord's theoretical framework as she repeatedly explained its meaning in her works. She uses the term to describe the kind of translation which does not fall into the category of documentary translation, or word-to-word translation. In this sense, the translator uses the source text as a model to produce an instrument for a new communicative interaction in the Chinese language. The translator adopting the instrumental translation is justified to adapt the source text to a certain extent to achieve the same range of functions (but maybe not in the same hierarchy) as the original text in the target culture. Specifically, Fu's translation can be sub-classified as a heterofunctional translation (also in Nord's term) in terms of translation form, which does not preserve a high degree of source text originality. The translator regards his adaptation as being valid and permissible because the American Civil War described in this book does not fit into Chinese readers' expectation.

<sup>10</sup> The original text in Chinese is: 總之，我的目的是在求忠實於全書的趣味精神，不在求忠實於一枝一節。

<sup>11</sup> The original text in Chinese is: 關於這書的譯法，我得向讀者諸君請求一點自由權。

Influenced by the movie, prospective readers of Fu's book were more concerned about the plot and the fate of the main characters than about the realistic meaning of the novel.

#### 3.4.4. Translation Methods – In What Circumstances, in What Way and with What Effects does the Communication Take Place?

Fu's translation is characterized by adaptation and liberality. Omitting a large quantity of the original text is Fu's elaborate design, and is also the reason why his translation is criticized as being unfaithful to the original novel (Wei, 2007, p. 65). About this, Fu has his own explanation: "Some tedious descriptions and analysis of the characters' inner world do not bear much relation with the proceeding of plots. Paragraphs that are going to bore the readers are definitely subject to deletion". (Fu, 1984, p. 442)<sup>12</sup>

Apart from reduction of information, Fu also adds information as a flexible means with multiple positive effects in translation. It helps the translator to convey the meaning of the original text, intensify stylistic beauty and produce better communication with the target reader. The supplementary information can be categorized into: (1) background information commonly known to original readers but foreign to target readers; (2) information added to guarantee logic and coherence in the translation; and (3) the translator's personal comprehension of some implicit expressions.

His book was very well received in his time, partly because his translation met the readers' expectation. Once again, it is clear that his arrangements are in line with the purpose the translation is designed to communicate in the target culture.

Besides, liberal translation played an important role in deciding the Chinese name of the book. The title *Gone with the Wind* originates from the twenty-fourth chapter of the novel, meaning the heroine's hometown no longer exists. Fu gives a full explanation about why he named his translation *Piao* [*Drifting*]. According to him, the meaning is two-fold: as a noun, it means a gust or a storm; as a verb, it indicates the state of being homeless. The first conveys the meaning of wind, while the second expresses the quality of being gone. As a result, one word is good enough to cover the original title.

## 4. Discussion

From the Functionalist perspective, there are various factors influencing a translational activity. Typically, initiators select the source text out of practical purposes; commissioners organize the translational activity by firstly choosing the translators, and secondly define the Skopos or purpose of the assignment; editors materialize the translation purpose in the preface/postscript, and effectively provide reading guidance for the target text receivers; and lastly, translators render the source text with purposeful strategies and methods, so that it will function in its intended way.

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<sup>12</sup> The original text in Chinese is: 一些冗長的描寫和心理的分析，覺得它跟情節的發展沒有多大關係，並且要使讀者厭倦的，那我就老實不客氣地將它整段刪節了。

Compared with traditional translation theories, Functionalism places a translational activity in its cultural context, as it takes the social and cultural background of the target readers into serious consideration. Functionalism holds that a translational activity always fulfills its job in communicating inter-culturally. Hence, the process summarized above can also be explained in terms of cross-cultural studies, which include: who communicates, what is communicated, to whom, for what purpose, in what circumstances, and in what way and with what effects does the communication take place (Zhang, 2003)?

The assumed rule that the target text should bear the same form as the source text is not always valid. More often than not, the evaluation of the quality of a translation is based on whether the target text is able to achieve its intended function in the target culture. Functionalists hold that the purpose justifies the translation strategy and accordingly determines the translation method. Therefore, the translator has to bear in mind the target readers' expectation as well as the intended function of the target text, which is known as the translation purpose. Otherwise, the translator cannot produce an ideal text that properly introduces a foreign setting into a local culture.

## 5. Conclusion

No language is a simple combination of words, phrases and sentences. Rather, a language involves complicated backgrounds of history, philosophy, religion and other cultural aspects of a nation. In this sense, translation is by no means a word-to-word rendition. It comes from one culture and goes into another. A translational activity thus is largely influenced by social, economic, religious as well as other factors from both cultures. The target text, which bears important qualities of the foreign culture, in turn becomes a constituent part of the local culture, and helps the local literature to be rich in variety.

Functionalism puts translation back into the cultural context where it occurs, and considers it as a product of trans-cultural communication. By compromising the textual and cultural integrity of the source text, the Functionalist approach justifies necessary strategies of rewriting, abbreviation, omitting and addition, in order to deliver a fully functional translation in a pleasingly mediated form. As a result, the source text will lose some of its foreign qualities after translation, and be endowed with some new qualities from the local culture. As can be seen from the textual analysis, translation is frequently manipulated by the political ideology of an era. Meanwhile, it serves to meet the expectation from the target readers. In a word, the success of the translation is measured by the criterion of functions, which is whether or not the translation serves its purpose to be communicated in the target culture.

This paper examines a total of three prefaces and one postscript attached to the Chinese translations of foreign texts. Through text analysis, typical culture communicators are identified, and their roles are explained in such a way that they work together as the key elements in translation as cross-cultural communication. By taking a Functionalist perspective, the paper explains the interactive relationship between translation and culture. Consequently, flexible translation methods are justified as long as they fulfill the purposes to be communicated in the target culture.

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