Literary translation and communication

Yifeng Sun*

Department of English, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, University of Macau, Macao, Macau SAR, China

The translator's main role is that of a communicator—and a cross-cultural one at that. Literary translation communicates more than semantic meaning. A range of literary features is also expected to be reproduced. Reconstructing the literary value and aesthetic experience of the source text is significantly hampered by literary untranslatability. The fundamental purpose of translation is communication, but because it is subject to a multitude of constraints that seriously limit communicative possibilities, literary untranslatability constantly threatens to hinder successful communication. Since translation is often said to transfer the original message to the target reader, communication breaks down when this attempt fails—which occurs more often than not. Literary translation purports to capture, convey and communicate multi-layered and interconnected information and feelings about another situation and community. Any monolithic perception of this inherent irreducibility of all-round functionality is at odds with the nature of literary translation. From a communicative perspective, literary translation aims at developing sophisticated forms to better convey and communicate ideas and feelings, as well as to provide situational cues to elicit appropriate responses from the target reader in tandem with that of the source reader. In light of this, cross-cultural adjustment predicted by contextual conditioning is constantly required to competently communicate the transcultural dimension that is intrinsic to literary translation. Translation is often referred to as a means of cross-cultural or intercultural communication, but how exactly translational communication operates still warrants further investigation. This article aims to examine this relationship from several interrelated aspects and, in this respect, to make a distinction between communication and convey, the latter being a commonly used verb in translation studies.

KEYWORDS

literary translation, literary communication, cross-cultural context, rewriting and mediation, referential communication, retranslation

Introduction

Translation involves two languages to communicate with two different audiences. The two languages may be similar or dissimilar, and in the latter case, communication problems abound. Literary translation serves as a network and nexus to make connections between languages and cultures by introducing the foreign to the target reader. Literary translation is often motivated and designed to serve one or more purposes. Since literary translation is never an innocent activity, the translator's purpose may well be

different from that of the original author. Cross-cultural communication is a fraught endeavor that requires mediation, appropriation, and negotiation. Because a literary text is processed and consumed by the target reader with a different background of literary tradition and from a different perspective of culture, ideology, and aesthetics, the translated text is interpreted and thus experienced differently, all of which contribute to the functioning of communication. An overarching awareness of the essential role of interactive communication underscores the interconnectedness of cross-cultural communication in literary translation. Acceptability has always been closely linked to literary translation. It is not only a matter of commercial considerations but also of the prospective literary status of the translated text in the target system. Literary translation is much more than semantic, and due consideration must be given to the reproduction of literariness that determines and informs the ultimate reception of the translated text. Another challenge that needs to be addressed in terms of adequate and reliable communication is the lack of substitutability in literary translation. With this in mind, some basic questions need to be addressed, such as what and how to communicate in terms of literary translation. In answering these questions, literary translation must first and foremost involve contextualization and recontextualization. Intercultural mediation works in tandem with literary translation, without which it would be impossible to communicate literary meaning. The necessity of retranslation(s) is in a sense justified by the concatenation of literary irreducibility and communicative referentiality, both of which are considered essential attributes of literary translation.

What and how to communicate?

Translation is concerned with situations of protracted displacement in which meaning becomes brittle and susceptible. Literary translation conveys the experiences of those who reside in different cultures yet reading literature from other cultures may cause meaning to become unclear and communication to disintegrate. First and foremost, communication connotes accessibility, which prefigures acceptability to a considerable extent. The question of what is communicated and how is of pertinent importance. It seems that, as dictated by common sense, the translator must find out the authorial intention so as to know for sure what is to be communicated. However, even if the translator strives to reflect the authorial intention, it is far from certain that this intent can even be ascertained. This complicates the entire process of communication. What does the translator communicate? Dixon and Bortolussi (1996, p. 406) contend that "... it is often unreasonable to ascribe a single, coherent intention to the author of a literary work". The fact is that it is often not only unreasonable but impossible to ascertain with reasonable certainty the exact intention of the author. The widespread but misguided assumption of authorial intention is at odds with the communicative reality of literature, which is defined by dialogic and polyphonic narrative discourse. What needs to be questioned is whether there is an intentional interpretation of the intended message.

At any rate, communication requires mediation: it is impossible to communicate well without paying due attention to reception. This is particularly the case when it comes to the need to cross both linguistic and cultural boundaries. Simply put, communication cannot be taken for granted if the transmission of only a partial view of the original is to be avoided. While clarity is an important aspect of communication, it is not in the least the only one in literary translation. Evidently, the literary translator grapples with not only semantic information but also poetic features. If stylistic peculiarities in the original are to be reproduced in translation, a communication infrastructure must be established to represent the relative fullness of meaning. Viewed in this light, the primary concern of communication remains semantic intelligibility but for literary translation, both cultural and literary irreducibility is invoked in challenging the hypothesis of homogeneity. The intelligibility and irreducibility of cultural meaning pose a precarious situation to the translator, who strives to reconcile and balance these competing demands. In practical terms, however, an either-or dichotomy can be thus created. Out of necessity, communication sometimes favors reductionism "for the sake of pragmatic effect" (Newmark, 1982, p. 18). In fact, this dichotomy is a false one. A combined semantic and communicative translation is remedial to oversimplification in translation. A host of factors may be attributed to the complexity of literary translation with regard to communication. Newmark speaks of a "balancing act" by the translator that takes into account factors such as the author, the reader, the norms and culture of the target language, and, in the case of literary translation, literary traditions (Newmark, 1982, p. 18). The performative act of literary translation is an integral part of cross-cultural communication, the success of which depends on a balanced scheme that brings out all facets of cultural meaning.

Translation is meant to serve a purpose or purposes, overt or covert. Thus, the functions of translation are prioritized according to the needs of the translator. In late Qing-period China, the famous reformist Liang Qichao (1873–1929) was particularly committed to the translation of political fiction (Luo, 2005). He gave priority to politics over art, claiming, "Politics is the first priority, art the second" (Liang, 2001, p. 147). In order to promote the effectiveness of the political reforms, he altered or abridged the source text. This is an exemplary case of the decided shift from source-orientedness to target-orientedness, which signifies that the emphasis is placed on the effect or impact of communication. "Communicative translation is on the whole responsible for importing many ideas and discoveries into a culture..." (Newmark, 1982, p. 19). Literary translation can be a powerful political or ideological weapon with which the translator communicates certain beliefs and values by selecting

the appropriate source texts, which are variously manipulated in the process of translation. In this regard, "Who is the translator?" question is of great relevance to what functions a translation is aimed at serving.

How translation communicates is related to the attitude and feelings of the translator. There is little doubt that translation is subject to interpretation and manipulation. According to Nida, in the context of translation, communication entails encoding and decoding (Nida, 1972, p. 310). In order to decode what is encoded, the reader must be active. Translation problematizes the "facility" with which people communicate because the "codes of two languages are never the same" (Nida, 1972, p. 310). In this sense, the codes in translation must be formulated in such a way that the target reader can decode the meaning conveyed. While encoding requires interpretation, the act of re-encoding in the target language is influenced by the attitude of the translator, whose way of doing so contributes significantly to the shaping of the target text and its effect on the target reader. The feelings of the translator may enter into the process of re-encoding. As for the translator's attitude, it makes a significant difference to reception whether it is a case of detachment or involvement. Resonant empathy and subsequent interaction are unmistakable indicators of successful cross-cultural communication. Translation is the result of asynchronous re-encoding, and the temporal distance allows a host of factors, including affective ones, to play various roles in shaping the final product of translation. Given a given semantic range, the interpreted signifieds are re-encoded in linguistic and cultural signifiers and representations, the selection of which reveals the preferences and performing decisions of the translator. The signifieds represented in the source text require interpretive effort and communicative competence because the chosen signifiers are capable of representing what the signifiers are intended or presumed to be intended by the author or the translator.

The workings of literary translation can be better understood by considering how literary communication functions. Literary translation is by no means limited to semantic representations. The heuristic nature of literary translation means that focusing exclusively on conveying semantic information risks losing the aesthetic appeal of the source text. For literary translation, semantic elusiveness is no less a problem than aesthetic elusiveness. Often, the proper rendering of the stylistic features of the original is undervalued in favor of semantic accuracy. However, literary translation cannot be separated from literary irreducibility, which implies the fullness of meaning, including cultural and aesthetic meaning. The aesthetic dimension, including its norms, values, qualities, and implications, is also expected to be communicated to the target reader. To be sure, literary irreducibility must be paramount in order for literary translation to stand out from other types of translation. Seen in this light, the connotations of words with associative meaning in the original feed into the very

essence of literary communication and must be carefully reproduced in translation so as not to diminish or detract from the aesthetic pleasure of reading the translated text. A proper understanding of the distinctiveness of literary communication enables the translator to find a way to enliven translation, which can then be considered both aesthetically and culturally acceptable.

Context of situation

Cross-cultural dialogue cannot exist without context, and the act of literary translation is shaped and constrained by contextual factors. Further research is required on the underlying function or role of cross-cultural context in literary translation. Translation invariably entails contextual changes or adjustments, and although rendering the commonly assumed textual transfer is problematic, when it comes to context, the situation is somewhat different. The existence of context helps to specify or clarify meaning, but since translation is involved in two sets of contexts, the intersection of which destabilizes the production of meaning in the target text, possibly leading to confusion or unintelligibility, or misunderstanding. The two sets of contexts, which may or may not be similar or comparable and which may or may not belong to the same historical periods, are capable of generating different meanings. This is due to the fact that translation is produced in a different language, in a different context, and for a different audience, resulting in a transformation that is defined by a different meaning, thus adding a great deal of complexity to the whole practice of cross-cultural communication. In the absence of the awareness of cultural displacement and cultural interface, literary translation can barely function. Literal translation accentuates cultural meaning transfer since textual reproduction is cross-culturally conditioned and aesthetically dependent in this situation. Meanwhile, in conjunction with this new context, a different perspective is brought to bear on cross-cultural adjustment to avoid dichotomizing the two sets of contexts created by translation.

To be more precise, translation is not just about one context, but about multiple contexts, some of which may be invisible or seemingly unworthy of attention. However, they are all conducive to the reproduction of a given literary text that is being translated. An overarching translational context consists of an array of related or interrelated contexts. First and foremost, there is a historical context. A source text belongs to the past, and possibly a distant one, as in the case of William Shakespeare. When translating such texts into the target language, the existence of a historical context cannot be denied and must be taken into account by the translator. Derrida argues:

> And it is already clear that, even in French, things change from one context to another. More so in the German, English, and especially American contexts, where the same word is already attached to very different connotations, inflections, and emotional or affective values (Derrida, 1988, p. 1).

Different cultural locations and contexts give meaning to different interpretations. Contextual changes generate interpretative possibilities and also subtly or not so subtly change various aspects of meaning and how they relate to the changed contexts. Different meaning construction and reconstruction processes provide for the shaping of the translated text.

It is probably very difficult to repudiate the emphasis on extra-literary context, as the New Critics are wont to do. The translator's effort is placed in jeopardy if the related historical context is disregarded. Moreover, New Criticism holds that close reading provides the context for its own interpretation of the text being read, and the text in question is responsible for creating its own context, which gives rise to the translator's context of interpretation: this is significant in terms of the motive or conditions in which meaning is processed and interpreted. Equally relevant and important is a wider social context that governs and constitutes the reality of translation. The translator examines and evaluates their "text-transformation strategies within the opportunities and constraints of interpersonal contacts and the wider social context" (Jones, 2004, p. 722). In summary, a multiplicity of functions is ascribed to literary translation determined by contexts. The wider social context of communicative activities can be analyzed in relation to the contextual parameters of the linguistic and extra-linguistic context of literary translation.

The reception of literary translations is of importance to patrons, publishers, and translators alike. The context that influences reception encompasses a variety of agencies that mediate the reception of literature. A plurality of perspectives from these agencies on various facets of translation activity underpins consideration of the extraliterary factors that dictate the reception of translated literature. In general, it may be asserted that poor translations impair reception and imperil the literary status of the translated text. In his dissertation on the reception of Latin American literature in the United States, James Remington Krause points out that a "failed translation" induced by a distorted, i.e., unreliable version "hinders" reception by the American reader (Krause, 2010, p. 2). While not always the case, this is true in many instances. A distorted and unreliable translation of the original can be quite successful commercially because it accommodates local preferences. And also because it saves the target reader from having to sift through a labyrinth of cultural allusions and references, an abridged translation can sometimes be very enticing and worth reading. In this view, a lack of readability rather than a lack of accuracy perfectly encapsulates poor translations, which represent poorly communicated cultural content and values.

The situation of reception of translated literary texts is assigned a specific context. The needs and expectations of the target reader are decisive factors. A certain degree of mutability is required to make adjustments and adaptations to a new context:

> Translation recreates past texts and becomes an autonomous act creating solely sustainable texts for the present and the future. In the same vein, adaptation treats intertextuality as a kind of versatile creativity that generates multiple forms to meet the changing requirements of new readers and contexts (Tsui, 2012, p. 58).

The shift of focus from source-orientedness to target-orientedness in modern translation studies shows the importance of responding to the new context in which the needs and expectations of the target reader are to be met. Of course, all source and target texts are written and rewritten in different contexts and are also consumed in different contexts. Moreover, the target reader, with their cross-cultural knowledge and communal frames for reading must be appropriately contextualized and situated in a particular sociocultural setting in order to enhance reception.

Another crucial point is that literary translation must pay attention to the efficacy of communication in terms of cohesion, as is shown in the following excerpt from *The Deer and the Cauldron*, a martial arts novel by Louis Cha, also known as Jin Yong (Minford, 1993, p. 87):

> 韦小宝 ⋯. 问道： "这小子是什么来头？瞧你吓得这个样子。茅十八道： "什么小子不小子的？你嘴里放干净些。" This is rendered by the translator as:
> "Who is this man?" he (Trinket) asked. "He seemed to put you in a dreadful funk all of a sudden."
> "Mind your language!" retorted Whiskers.

The back translation of "这小子是什么来头？" is "Who is this guy?" and is translated literally without considering the context, whereas 什么小子不小子的 does not allow for back translation because it makes no sense in its literal meaning. Thus, it is simply reduced to the verb "retorted". Obviously, the word 小子 is context-dependent, the repeated use of which is significant here. For this reason, the word must be contextualized to account for Whiskers' hostile reaction.

The translator lacks circumspection in rendering the Chinese word 小子, although it can indeed mean "man" or "boy" and is often used as a term of endearment, as in "my dear mate" When contextualized, this situation inevitably sounds disrespectful or abusive, without which "mind your language" would be completely out of place, and the target reader is puzzled by Whiskers' brusque retort, which seems unwarranted.

Word choice is crucial in this situation. The original function of 小子 must be correlated with its offensive character. The choice, therefore, falls on the word "sod":

> "Who is this sod?" he asked. "You look scared out of your wits."
> "Don't you sod me and stop your insolence!" said Whiskers.

In the second line, "sod" is used as a verb to counteract the grossly simplified "retort." The irreducibility of "Don't you sod me" should not be replaced by "retort" marked by explicitness. Adequacy and irreducibility are intertwined, and both are overshadowed by an overt emphasis on effective communication.

Intercultural mediation

It is generally known that there is no such thing as an unmediated literary translation. Literary translation is so entrenched in any attempt to convey cultural information that no literary translation can function without it. Therefore, it must be said that the act of translating literary texts must necessarily engage with the cultural dimension of literary texts. The target readers' insufficient knowledge of the source culture must be acknowledged, and it would be irresponsible to pretend that missing linkages and gaps do not exist. According to Hatim, "cross-cultural misunderstandings" are often ascribed to "a breakdown in communication" (Hatim, 1997, p. 157). There is no denying that breakdowns in communication are due to cultural differences and implications. Unless cultural meaning is more or less immediately understood by the target reader, the reading of a literary translation is seriously affected. The contextually embedded meaning-making in various cross-cultural encounters is fundamental to the way cultural meaning is reproduced in translation. In the context of literary translation, cultures are necessarily mediated, leading to the operationalization of appropriation and ultimately acculturation and assimilation.

The intervention and manipulation that constitute this process of cross-cultural rewriting are tempered by re-adjustments and realignments that represent the translator's perceptions of cultural differences that can subsequently be integrated into the target culture. All this suggests that the translator's task is that of a cross-cultural communicator and that mediation and appropriation are an essential part of literary translation in order to improve communication. According to Anthony J. Liddicoata:

> The mediational role of the translator "(…) goes beyond the expression of meaning through language to encapsulate the need to communicate the meanings that are present in text but which are expressed implicitly, through context" (Liddicoata, 2015, p. 355).

In other words, interpretation is required on the part of the translator to express clearly in the target text what is implicitly expressed in the original. Mediation is administered through a given cross-cultural context in which communication is open and subject to manipulative interpretation and performance. Literary translation vacillates between implicitness and explicitness and also between inclusion and exclusion.

Translation is a rewriting process but also a recontextualizing process. Rewriting and recontextualizing are conjoined together. Translation inevitably leads to some form of recontextualization. To recontextualize foreign ideas and practices means to interpret them in a different cultural context. Cross-cultural dialogue and engagement take place in the setting of reception. Venuti outlines the various functions of recontextualization in relation to the recontextualizing process, which is.

> [...] the creation of another network of intertwining relations by and within the translation, a receiving intertext [...] [as well as] another context of reception whereby the translation is mediated by promotion and marketing strategies' (Venuti, 2007, p. 30).

The relocation of the setting of reception suggests that certain changes are inevitable. Essentially, recontextualization is motivated by the perception of situations for various communicative functions. The resulting different context of reception requires translation to be mediated in view of the market.

Usually, the target reader is not the intended audience of the original work, and there may be some problems in conveying to them the originally intended function, although it is not so difficult to communicate to them the function intended by the translator. When a translation is consumed in the indigenous context, the target reader is provided with an opportunity for interpretation and understanding of the source material. Liddicoat points out that "mediation is fundamentally an interpretive act" (Liddicoata, 2015, p. 354). Perhaps it is more accurate to say mediation is based on and underpinned by interpretation. The mediating role of the translator.

> The translator as mediator stands between the reader and writer and rewrites the text for an audience that is not the audience imagined by the writer and does not share the language, knowledge, assumptions, etc. that the writer has assumed of the imagined audience for the text (Liddicoata, 2015, p. 356).

This suggests that rewriting is culturally ingrained with mediation, which at least partially initiates rewriting. It is the unsharable or less sharable parts of the original text that require cross-cultural processing. A new cultural context thus created is a direct outcome of literary translation, generating an interpretive framework for retargeting a different group of

readers. Translation produces a text that has been rewritten to contextually address the target audience.

Decontextualization pertains to the necessity to disregard the previous context associated with the source text. This is sometimes done to circumvent the constraints the translator faces when trying to "transfer" cultural material from the original. When the translation process becomes too alienated, which can hinder communication, the need for recontextualization arises, signifying that the context of the original author is replaced by the context provided by the translator, which is no longer the immediate context of the original text, but a recreated one for the target text. Once this immediacy is lost, "… a far more recurrent designation to describe this notion is 'oblique translation'" (Vinay and Darbelnet, 1995, p. 1). Recontextualization, however, does not imply a complete substitution, i.e., the replacement of the original context with the target context; rather, a derivative context may appear as a result of recontextualization. Given that the unfamiliar may represent the unperceivable, the existing habits and norms associated with the familiar in the target language and culture require and influence recontextualization. This can lead to a recontextualization of the original in a native cultural milieu and ethos. Another related consideration is that the original context may well be multifaceted and situation-dependent, the cultural-political conditions and practices of the target system may simplify or override the original functionality, which likely determines and establishes a specific semantic range within which interpretation can take place and be reasonably deciphered. Simply put, the production of the source text and the reproduction of the target text are contextualized somewhat differently. However, even though strict semantic equivalence is difficult to achieve, dynamic equivalence in a holistic sense is a powerful way of communicating.

Referential communication

Literary translation is marked by cultural references and allusions that can bring translation to the brink of untranslatability and cast a shadow over intercultural communication. On the surface, these references and allusions exhibit a tendency to make understanding difficult. If the literary translator, however, decides to communicate meaning only by disregarding all the seemingly non-essential material, the outcome will be disastrous. References and allusions are by no means superfluous, and effective literary communication depends on them. The source and target readers have ways of decoding, which complicates the task of communication for the target reader in a translation situation. The referential function is often different in a different linguistic and cultural context. Yet while adhering to the referential integrity of the original constrains translation, the translator still needs to find a way to reproduce the referential multiplicity one way or another. Referential transfer can be problematic. When

emphasized, it indicates a source-oriented tendency; when not, it indicates a target-oriented inclination. However, even if target-orientedness is the chosen option, referential processing cannot be precluded. It goes without saying that translation cannot communicate everything and inclusiveness including referential connectedness is impossible. In sum, when literal transfer of references or allusions does not work, the translator's search for functional equivalence seems to be a conciliatory alternative. Based on constructing the dynamic functioning of communication, literary translation can employ a range of related strategies to reproduce the effect of the original on the target reader.

The question is: does the translator communicate with an original author, living or dead, one way or another, or simply get on with what they have interpreted from their reading of the source text? In reality, certain cultural references or allusions appear to be non-essential and are therefore considered unimportant or less relevant. The referentiality of cross-cultural communication resists simple treatment. As for translating or writing in the original, the question remains: what is to be communicated? What about culture-specific lexis or cultural referents? It is common knowledge that literary translation is referentially difficult. If the translator plays it safe, the end result may well be bland and aesthetically unappealing. A successful literary translation is predicated on the idea of imaginative boldness and adventure. At the same time, referential versatility is vitally required for identifying and distinguishing between dead or hackneyed metaphors and vibrant or compelling metaphors. On the other hand, an interpreted treatment of a reference or allusion is also required when references or allusions are recognized as being of little aesthetic value or significance. It is often observed that when a metaphor is translated idiomatically, it is naturally adjusted, modified, adulterated, or even substituted. In this process of supposed replication, various forms of transformation are often manifested as a result of the demand for a certain degree of flexibility and adaptability for the sake of readability, pointing to the creative dimension of literary translation.

Another important indication of cross-cultural communication lies in the relationship between signification and intertextuality in literary translation, where meaning refers to other texts in the source culture. After references and allusions, intertextuality poses a greater challenge to translation in conveying what is intended in the source text. Given cultural and historical differences, the precariousness of intertextuality in relation to reading is exacerbated by the act of translation and also not less importantly, by the rewriting process in which other texts are read by the author who then rewrites them by interweaving them into the source text, which is the result of rewriting intertexts. According to Venuti, intertextuality is the key to the production and reception of translations. Yet it is almost impossible to translate most foreign intertexts completely or accurately. "As a result, they are usually replaced by analogous

but ultimately different intertextual relations in the receiving language" (Venuti, 2009, p. 157). This is undoubtedly an inevitable but benign reconfiguration to ensure communicative access. The translator is dealing with signifiers that refer only to other signifiers in a multidimensional space. At times the other signifiers represent other texts, and it is the translator's task to help the target reader recognize the intertextuality in translation.

The establishment of "analogous … intertextual relations" in the target text is by no means easy, for the loss and dysfunction of intertextuality are difficult to avoid. Venuti proposes a "solution" but immediately refutes it:

> To compensate for the loss of intertextuality, the translator might rely on paratextual devices, such as an introductory essay or annotations, which can be useful in restoring the foreign cultural context and in articulating the cultural significance of an intertextual relation as well as its linguistic basis. Yet in making such additions the translator's work ceases to be translating and becomes commentary (Venuti, 2009, p. 159).

Paratextual devices are obviously a less-than-ideal way of addressing the issue of intertextual relations in the source text. Venuti's concern is well-grounded, and this would call into question the identity of translation. But if additions are used sparingly and judiciously, and only in a paraphrasing way, the translated text does not necessarily become a commentary. Perhaps what is in the source text is not fully conveyed, but the important dimensions are communicated to the target reader.

A related consideration in terms of translating references, allusions and intertexts is for the translation scholar to decide which of the two words "convey" and "communicate" to choose to describe how the translation is presented and received. It is observed that in translation studies, the two verbs are sometimes used when referring to the transmission of information across linguistic and cultural boundaries. However, there seem to be some subtle differences between them. When we look at translation as a form of communication, it is necessary to address these differences. For instance, translation is said to convey the same meaning as the original (Gutt, 1990; Menacere, 1992; Gonzales and Zantjer, 2015). The implicit emphasis is on source-orientedness, which refers to carrying the message, including its referential and pragmatic effects, from the source language to the target language. In this sense, it is akin to transfer or delivery. Communicating, on the other hand, suggests imparting or transmitting and is less straightforward and involves a more conscious effort. Therefore, it suggests a certain form or degree of mediation, the overarching purpose of which is to ostensibly make provision for reception. It is comparatively more purposeful, seeking to ensure the message is delivered to the target reader in a certain way, with greater emphasis on target-orientedness. It is possible for something to be conveyed, but it does not necessarily mean that it

is communicated with an emphasis on the effectiveness of transmitting information, which contributes to intelligibility. This is reflected in Newmark's statement that communicative translation can be overly differently motivated by the translator who intends to "achieve a certain effect" (Newmark, 1977, p. 167). It is no surprise that authorial intention and translatorial intention in communication do not always converge. This is a double communication: the translator communicates first with the source text and then with the target reader. Moreover, communication tends to be interpretive in order to match a particular translated text with a contextualized understanding of reality.

Retranslation

The reasons for re-translating certain texts can be manifold but improving the effectiveness of communication is one of the main reasons. The outdated nature of earlier translations may have hindered or impaired communication, creating the need to "update" existing texts. With earlier translations, ideological and aesthetic issues come into play in the context of changing cultural standards and the ceaseless pursuit of an ideal translation. A new translation may not be ideal, but it signals a conscious effort to improve. Moreover, as Massardier-Kenney notes, a number of steps can be taken to get things right: "…corrections of mistranslations, reinstatement of censored or deleted passages, datedness of the language, new insights into the text, allusions clarified, improvement of the awkward style of the first translation, etc." (Massardier-Kenney, 2015, p. 73). When retranslation is deemed necessary, the communicative situation in the target culture has usually changed and a contextual evolution can be observed. In addition, the changed circumstances can bring about tolerance of the foreign, and the target reader is more willing to experience or even embrace foreign otherness. As a result, more accuracy and reliability are provided by the retranslator, who is able to actualize, in the new version, the potential meaning that is not included in the previous version(s). Improved inclusiveness is a strong justification for retranslation.

The aforementioned are some general patterns for retranslation. The history of literary translation is not a clear linear progression. D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* in Chinese translation has gone through many versions since 1936. Many of them are abridged versions, and so far, two complete translations are available. The first of the two, translated by Rao Shuyi, was released in 1936. The retranslation by Zhao Susu was published in 2004. With a temporal gap of 68 years between the two versions, one would expect some significant differences. Not surprisingly, the retranslation is more circumspect in translating sex scenes than the early version when censorship regarding sex scenes was not as strict. Yet the most extraordinary part of the story was the 1986 reprint of

this 1936 translation by Hunan Renmin Chubanshe (Human People's Publishing House). It caused a sensational stir. 50,000 copies of the first edition were printed. However, the timing of the publication was not favorable. Soon after its publication, some people considered the book "pornographic" and reported it to the highest authorities. The release of this translated text was banned. However, when Zhao Susu, who would be the retranslator, came across this Lawrence's novel, he believed that it deserved wider circulation in China. Almost immediately after its publication in January 2004, followed by a new edition in March of the same year, Zhao's retranslation became a seasonal bestseller and sold over 100,000 copies, making it a popular book among readers (Liu, 2013, p. 75).

While the 1936 translation was republished in 1986—half a century after its first release, the retranslation was not published until 2004, 18 years after the controversy over the reprint. Both translations are marked "Complete Translation" on the front cover. Yet, as mentioned above, the new version is a bowdlerized one, perhaps because the translator or/and the publisher did not want to get into trouble with the censors. So, in the 1936 version practically all the "sensual" sexual descriptions of the original text are retained. In this sense, it is an unabridged translation. However, the retranslation is not strictly a complete version of the original, since many of the sex scenes are either missing or heavily abridged, or simply marked by apostrophes. Some of the "offensive" words have been toned down by the translator. An outstanding example is "fuck". In the translation, it is rendered "love making" (zuoai) as opposed to "sexual intercourse" in the original translation. It is, admittedly also a less direct way of translating. Another word is "penis." Rao's translation is quite simple, calling a penis a penis. However, Zhao's translation is euphemistic and is rendered as "spear" (qiang), "root of life" (minggenzi), and "that thing" (nahuo). He conceded the publisher should eliminate hundreds of sexual organ allusions and explicit sex scenes, which must be appropriately toned down to avoid being grouped with pornographic literature (Liu, 2013, p. 75). Despite everything, the translation primarily serves the purpose of proving an "acceptable" translation for the target reader. It can be felicitously interpreted as an "improvement" in terms of acceptability in the sense of circumventing censorship.

Given the improved reception situation (even if this is not always the case, as the example above shows), the intertextual possibilities can be further explored so that the reading experience of the target reader can be reshaped. According to Venuti, "Intertextuality enables and complicates translation, preventing it from being an untroubled communication and opening the translated text to interpretive possibilities that vary with cultural constituencies in the receiving situation" (Venuti, 2009, p. 157). The reception situation has no doubt changed. The intertextually untranslatable has become somewhat translatable, or at least less untranslatable. While it is true that "… intertextual relations, in particular, cannot be reproduced merely by a close rendering of the words and phrases that establish those relations in the foreign text" (Venuti, 2009, p. 159), a retranslation can

take advantage of the changed "intertextual relations" and open up more dimensions of the source text to the target reader. The richness and magnitude of cross-cultural communication can be better realized. Against this background, canonical works are more likely to be retranslated in the belief that what is merely inchoate and amorphous in the earlier translation can be rendered or developed, possibly in a different light but more in line with what was originally intended. Also, more aspects of empathy, motivation, and emotional involvement should be conveyed to the target reader.

All this is made possible by the changed situational context that has become the basis for the development of meaning. What was explicitly rendered becomes redundant. With better-developed cross-cultural knowledge on the part of the target reader, more of the implicitness can be recovered in the new translation, along with more referential properties of the original words. In short, the once-impaired adequacy of the previous translation can be restored. As Susanne Cadera notes, "… a new translation of the same literary work can indicate historical, social and cultural changes in the target culture that lead to the need for a new version" (Cadera, 2016, p. 11). The retranslator also has the opportunity to bring out more of the multiple implications and nuances, reconcile cultural incompatibilities, and eliminate metaphorical incongruities. Moreover, the retranslator should be better able to convey the ineffable or the untranslatable. The resulting more interpretive possibilities lead to a greater variety of manipulations. Furthermore, "… comparison of retranslations of the same work can reveal different types of manipulation due to the social and historical context" (Cadera, 2016, p. 14). Manipulations suggest that a slightly different message is being conveyed, or they may be motivated by an effort to overcome untranslatability. Retranslation is an act of re-rewriting based on the previous rewriting, and different spatial scales are created to allow for re-mediated communication.

Conclusion

Translation is a means of communication between different worldviews and cultural experiences connected by a communication infrastructure that enables the flow of knowledge and information. One of the ways to enable and promote global communication is through literary translation. The effectiveness of translation is a primary concern that is inextricably linked to whether it succeeds in bringing outstanding literary works to the target reader. This depends largely on the quality of communication and involves more than semantic translation, for the communication of literary meaning through translation must be central. The socio-political dimension cannot be separated from the difference and diversity inherent in the practice of translation. Unlike other types of translation, poetics plays a prominent role in literary translation in a cross-cultural context, and the transmission of aesthetic pleasure and aesthetic taste is essential. The incommensurability of one context with

another leads to a form of recontextualization. The uprooting and displacement caused by translation are unsettling and contextualization on the part of the translator can help situate a text in a particular historical moment, providing a basis or framework for interpretation. The originally contextualized cultural material is decontextualized to facilitate communication and then recontextualized so that the target reader can engage with the introduced cultural material. Interpretation, contextualization, and recontextualization involve cross-cultural references and allusions as well as intertextual understanding. The recoverability and irrecoverability of the original context aside, in order to bring foreign otherness manifested as the unknown or the unfamiliar into the target text and for it to make sense to the target reader, mediation is an essential part of cross-cultural communication, which leads to intercultural rewriting since forceful transfer is not conducive to communication. Therefore, literary irreducibility is required, which underlines the instability and indeterminacy of literary meaning. All this contributes to the complexity and interconnectedness of the multiple dimensions of literary communication.

Data availability statement

The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article/supplementary

material, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author/s.

Author contributions

The author confirms being the sole contributor of this work and has approved it for publication.

Conflict of interest

The author declares that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Publisher's note

All claims expressed in this article are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of their affiliated organizations, or those of the publisher, the editors and the reviewers. Any product that may be evaluated in this article, or claim that may be made by its manufacturer, is not guaranteed or endorsed by the publisher.

References

Cadera, S. M. (2016). "Literary retranslation in context: a historical, social and cultural perspective", in *Literary Retranslation in Context*, eds S. M. Cadera, and A. S. Walsh (Oxford and New York, NY: Peter Lang). doi: 10.3726/b10749

Derrida, J. (1988). "Letter to a Japanese Friend trans. David B. Allison," in *Derrida and Différance*, eds D. Wood, and R. Bernasconi (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press), 1–8.

Dixon, P., and Bortolussi, M. (1996). Literary communication: effects of reader-narrator cooperation. *Poetics* 23, 405–430.

Gonzales, L., and Zantjer, R. (2015). Translation as a user-localization practice. *Techn. Commun.* 62, 271–284.

Gutt, E. A. (1990). A theoretical account of translation-without a translation theory. *Target. Int. J. Transl. Stud.* 2, 135–164.

Hatim, B. (1997). *Communication Across Cultures: Translation Theory and Contrastive Text Linguistics*. Exeter: University of Exeter Press.

Jones, F. R. (2004). Ethics, aesthetics and *Décision*: literary translating in the wars of the Yugoslav succession. *Meta Transl. J.* 49, 711–728. doi: 10.7202/009777ar

Krause, J. R. (2010). *Translation and the reception and influence of latin american literature in the United States* (PhD Dissertation). Vanderbilt University.

Liang, Q. (2001). "On the relationship between the novel and the masses," in *An Edited Collection of Articles in the Yinbing Room, Vol.* 1 (Kunming: Yunnan Education Press), 758–760.

Liddicoata, A. J. (2015). Intercultural mediation, intercultural communication and translation. *Perspect. Stud. Translatol.* 24, 354–364. doi: 10.1080/0907676X.2014.980279

Liu, Y. (2013). "性伦理视角下的《查泰莱夫人的情人》： 赵苏苏译本分析 (*Lady Chatterley's Lover* from the perspective of sexual ethics: an analysis of Zhao Susu's translated version). *J. Lang. Literat. For. Lang. Educ. Teach.* 41, 74–75; 129.

Luo, X. (2005). Ideology and literary translation. *Perspect. Stud. Transl. Theory Pract.* 13, 178–187. doi: 10.1080/09076760508668990

Massardier-Kenney, F. (2015). Toward a rethinking of retranslation. *Transl. Rev.* 92, 73–85. doi: 10.1080/07374836.2015.1086289

Menacere, M. (1992). Arabic discourse: overcoming stylistic difficulties in translation. *Babel* 38, 28–37.

Minford, J. (1993). *The Deer and the Cauldron by Louis Cha and translated by John Minford*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Newmark, P. (1977). Communicative and semantic translation. *Babel* 23, 163–180.

Newmark, P. (1982). A further note on communicative and semantic translation. *Babel* 28, 18–20.

Nida, E. A. (1972). Communication and translation. *Bible Transl.* 23, 309–316.

Tsui, C. S. K. (2012). "The authenticity in 'adaptation': a theoretical perspective from translation studies," in *Translation, Adaptation and Transformation*, eds X. Y. Lawrence, and A. Raw (London and New York, NY: Bloomsbury Publishing).

Venuti, L. (2007). Adaptation, Translation, Culture. *J. Vis. Cult.* 6, 25–44. doi: 10.1177/1470412907075066

Venuti, L. (2009). Translation, intertextuality, interpretation. *Rom. Stud.* 27, 157–173. doi: 10.1179/174581509X455169

Vinay, J. P., and Darbelnet, J. (1995). *Comparative Stylistics of FrenchandEnglish: A Methodology for Translation*. Transl. by J. C. Sagar, and M. J. Hamel. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Zhang, Y. (2004). "劳伦斯悄悄复活: 专访《查泰莱夫人的情人》 (The quiet resurrection of Lawrence: an interview with the translator Zhao Susu of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*). *Tianjin Daily*.