The Functions of Componential Analysis to the Translation of Cultural Animal Images in *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*

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The thesis aims to explain the functions of componential analysis to animal images in *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*. It serves as a treasure to the tremendous Chinese classics. However, as most of the animal images in the classic book are rarely seen in daily life, translation of animal images in the ancient Chinese book remains a hard nut to crack. In this case, explicit and accurate interpretation of these culture-loaded items is crucial to make readers understand. However, few previous studies touched upon this area. In this case, componential analysis serves as a solution. As an effective approach for analyzing semantic components, componential analysis is an effective way to break down semantic components of words and make them easily understood. In the previous studies, papers relating translation to componential analysis were not the majority. Among them, few papers are concerning application of componential analysis to the translation of literary works. In this essay, the analysis of animal images could be interpreted in lexical and textual level respectively. In this case, componential analysis bridges the gap for culture differences and enables readers of target language to savor the beauty. Therefore, readers of the target language can enjoy alien cultures of ancient China by reading this translated version.

Keywords: componential analysis, *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*, animal image

Introduction

The Classic of Mountains and Seas is an unparalleled encyclopedia of China in the prehistoric times. Its content covers geography, ethnology, religion, medicine, history, mythology, zoology, medicine, etc. It can serve as a treasure to the tremendous Chinese classics. As for when the book was finished up, a definite conclusion has not been found. The earliest document recording the content of *The Classic of Mountains and Seas* is *Book of Songs*. Until 1930s, the interpretation of the book has not been available. The research for *The Classic of Mountains and Seas* has been reversed. ZHONG Jin-wen served as the pioneer to follow the trend. Not only did he introduce the book to modern literature researchers, but also he was the first scholar who undertook the research systematically and completely.

In the modern classification of books, *The Classic of Mountains and Seas* could be considered as "literature" because the goodness and monsters described in the book are traced in many parts of the world. What is more, most of the recorded treasures, animals, and plants are weird and barely seen. Therefore, *The Classic of Mountains and Seas* could be regarded as novel recording stories in ancient times. As for the classification of the book, subjectivity could serve as the feature. The scholar decided the classification, the

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definition of the category, and the structure of the categories. From LIU Xiang, and LIU Xin to the classification of *The Imperial Collection of Four*, many other ways of classification have been put forward.

The Animal Images of *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*

As for the content of *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*, opinions are varied. The content describing in the book is grotesque in shape and gaudy in color, which makes readers think it is weird, scientific, mystical, and holy. However, *The Classic of Mountains and Seas* describes stories in the chapters with graphics. To some degree, it can be regarded as an epic in ancient mythology.

The animals in *The Classic of Mountains and Seas* are mostly imaginary. Firstly, most of the featured parts are their eyes and bodies by which they fly. Secondly, the number of their organs is unusual. Specifically speaking, they usually have one eye, one wing, and one foot. However, they have more than one head, tail, and body. Thirdly, animals usually share many features with other animals. Snakes, sheep, and birds are often characterized by the features mentioned above. Moreover, every animal has its distinctive function. Most of them have positive effects on human being. The first kind of animal is the one that you can eat them directly and your problems would be solved. Another kind of animal is the one that after you eat them, you could avoid disasters that would befall you. The third kind of animal is the one that your diseases will be cured after you use or eat them. For example, when you scrub some parts of animals to your skin or other parts of your body, your dermatosis will be cured.

Therefore, it can be demonstrated that in the ancient times when *The Classic of Mountains and Seas* is written, people attach great importance to animals. These animals have magical power that can do benign or evil things to people. Some of features are even owned by powerful gods.

Introduction to Componential Analysis

Introduction to Componential Analysis

Componential analysis focuses on the research of notional lexical-semantic relations by regarding words as the research object. Semanticists divide the content words into many sense components so as to make a fundamental comparison with each word. Generally speaking, this approach is more applicable to different words in the same semantic field. For example, for the structural linguists, man and woman could be regarded as antonyms in the same semantic field. Therefore, componential analysis is employed to explain them:

Man = [+ person] [+ adult] [+ male]

Woman = [+ person] [+ adult] [- male]

Leech divides the meaning of words into seven types: conceptual meaning, connotative meaning, social meaning, affective meaning, reflected meaning, collocative meaning, and thematic meaning. According to Leech, the focus is on the conceptual meaning. The conceptual meaning, usually called denotation, is the core of language communication. In a sense, conceptual meaning is indispensable to basic language function. Other layers of meaning are not so essential (Leech, 1987, p. 13).

According to the rule diving sentence structures, bigger language units are composed of small language units. That is to say, we can analyze language units by every layer of meaning till we get the minimum unit.

Previous Studies on Componential Analysis

Three cornerstones of modern semantics are: the theory of Bedeutungsfeld built on Neo-Humboldtism, the

semantic analysis method built on structural functionalism, and the systematic meaning of relation semantics built on the basis of referential meaning.

Componential analysis refers to a method that could formulize lexemes and make them accurate. Just as what it implies, it conveys meaning by revealing the composition of lexemes. The essence of componential analysis lies in that features of words are presented by analyzing components of distinctive units. Although adopting componential analysis to solving linguistic problems has obstacles and problems, it has enlightened the circle of linguistic studies.

Studies on Componential Analysis by Peter Newmark

On the whole, the formalization of componential analysis is seemed as the formalization of interpretation of language. In this way, componential analysis could be transferred as a process able to operate and testify. From what is mentioned above, features of componential analysis are summarized in translating literary works:

The first feature is that the meaning of words lies in the way of expressing. Moreover, the semantic components could be interpreted by analyzing definitions. That is to say, for the universality of semantic components, the semantic components have set semantic components. They can be lexicalized in all languages. Therefore, they are common.

The second feature is that no semantic components could not be analyzed. Although the number of sememe is huge, it has limitations. What is more, we could extract the most commonly seen sememes in the natural language so as to set up a fixed set of semantic components to describe its lexical meaning. In this way, we choose to find words with limited numbers. Therefore, not all the semantic components can be lexicalized in all languages, but all the semantic components presenting in all languages lie in the list of inventory of semantic components. That is to say, the description of any word in every language needs a list of inventory of semantic components, for the reason that nothing can stop the lexicalization of distinctive features in a language.

The third feature is that the contents and number of componential analysis are not definite, which is supposed to be elaborated. Although the meaning of items lies in the way of expressing, language could not convey the meaning absolutely accurately. Language underspecifying meaning is the normal state of language expressing. Therefore, whether for objective or subjective reasons, the situation that different people hold different opinions is understandable. Different understandings do not mean different ideas. The understanding of the meaning differentiates itself from meaning itself. That is to say, componential analysis is just a theoretical entity for convenient research. The contents and number of semantic components are not definite, which can be adjusted or altered. For what is mentioned above, it is safe to make the conclusion that the assumption of semantic components is not definite, not absolute. Different dictionaries can assume different numbers and contents of semantic components. For a specific concept, different semantic components could be analyzed according to what is required.

For Peter Newmark, componential analysis in translation is different from componential analysis in linguistics.

> In translation, the basic process is to compare a SL word with a TL word which has a similar meaning, but is not an obvious one-to-one equivalent, by demonstrating first their common and then their differing sense components. Normally the SL word has a more specific meaning than the TL word, and the translator has to add one or two TL sense components to the corresponding TL word in order to produce a closer approximation of meaning. (Newmark, 1988, p. 11)

The Functions of Componential Analysis in the Interpretation of the
Animal Images in *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*

The meaning of word is the main research subject of semantics. The meaning of word links the symbol of language to the real world. In the language system, word remains as the minimum unit of language. Words reflect the subject world by concepts and thoughts. It remains as the foundation of sentences, paragraphs, and texts. The appropriate organization of words constructs complete thoughts. However, the process of translation is aimed to render words in the source language into the correspondent words in the target language. Therefore, translation usually begins with words in the text, conveying the message in the source language by studying meaningful words. When items are translated, many factors need to be taken into consideration. The process of translation is not just consulting the dictionary. We are supposed to take sentence structures, the contents of text, social surroundings, historical background, and cultural contents into consideration.

That is to say, componential analysis in linguistic studies is slightly different from that in translation studies. Like Newmark mentioned:

> Componential analysis in translation is not the same as componential analysis in linguistics; in linguistics it means analyzing or splitting up the various senses of a word into sense-components which may or may not be universals; in translation, the basic process is to compare a SL word with a TL word which has a similar meaning, but is not obvious one-to one equivalent, by demonstrating first their common and then their differing sense components. (Newmark, 1988, p. 114)

Functions in Lexical Level

In terms of translating specific cultural items, componential analysis has made great contributions, especially in the process of translating cultural sets and series, interpreting conceptual terms and differentiating synonyms. In most cases, due to culture differences, translation of culture-loaded words is difficult to achieve accuracy. Therefore, the translation of culture-loaded items remains a hard nut to crack. In such condition, componential analysis provides us with an appropriate way of interpreting them accurately and explicitly.

Cultural sets and series. Peter Newmark has mentioned in his *A Textbook of Translation*: "CA can be used to distinguish the meanings of SL cultural sets or series, when their TL 'equivalents', even if they have transparently similar names, have widely different functional and or descriptive (substantive) components" (Newmark, p. 111). Although cultural sets have transparently similar names, they differ a lot in terms of functional and descriptive components. That is to say, they share distinct cultural characteristics respectively and it is essential to tell them apart so as to make readers understand.

For this type of animal images, equivalent words cannot be found in the target language. The whole image has not occurred or been accepted in the target language. Readers of the target language do not have the roughest idea of what these animals look like. What is more, such culture-loaded words carry much information about cultures of source language and are crucial to make us comprehend. In *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*, many culture-loaded items occur and it is a difficult job to render it into English. In this case, if the items are intended to be interpreted completely and accurately, a brand new image is needs to be created to make it understood. That is to say, a solution for new words which have never occurred in the Chinese-English dictionary before it is available.

For example, in *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*, the cultural set "当康" (WANG, ZHAO, & CHEN, 2010, p. 128) has no equivalent word in the target language. That means the image of "当康" needs to be

created. In this case, the blank of animal images has been filled out. By analyzing semantic components, a new word can be defined in a scientific way. It is not just rendered at random. Although not all the semantic components can be lexicalized in all the languages, every semantic component occurring in the lexical meaning of a certain language is listed in the inventory of semantic components. In this case, many animal images in *The Classic of Mountains and Seas* can be known by readers in modern China or in the English-speaking countries.

Take another cultural set "开明兽" (WANG, ZHAO, & CHEN, 2010, p. 250) as an example, it is translated as "kaiming animal" in *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*. Although transliteration and liberal translation are adopted, the meaning of this word in the source language could not be successfully conveyed. When readers encounter this English version, they just interpret it as an animal named "kaiming". However, the original word could express more messages than that. In the Chinese old books, "开明兽" means the legendary animal who guards the door in the heaven (WANG, ZHAO, & CHEN, 2010, p. 253). If we just render it into "kaiming", it would fail to convey the message to readers of the target language.

Take another word "乘黄" (WANG, ZHAO, & CHEN, 2010, p. 226) as an example, it is translated as "Chenghuang". In the Chinese old books, "乘黄" is an animal that looks like a fox and has horns on its back. Whoever rides on it, he will be able to live a long life of 2,000 years (WANG, ZHAO, & CHEN, 2010, p. 227). For readers in the English-speaking countries, even for modern Chinese, "乘黄" has never been acknowledged before. If the translated version is just "Chenghuang", no one has the slightest idea of what the animal looks like. If it is interpreted as:

Chenghuang: + giant legendary horse + triple of a normal horse + four wings + pierce horn

Readers who do not know anything about it would have a rough idea of what it looks like and what features it has. By adopting componential analysis, the culture-loaded items which never occurred before have been clearly and concisely presented. In this way, the blank of culture difference has been filled out.

Take another word "精卫" (WANG, ZHAO, & CHEN, 2010, p. 96) as an example, it is translated as "Jingwei". For Chinese people, it is known to all that "精卫" dates from a legendary story. According to the legendary story,

> The bird is originally Nüwa, the youngest daughter of Emperor Yandi. She was drowned when swimming in the East Sea. Thus she transformed herself into the bird *jingwei* and often carried broken woods and pebbles in the mouth to fill the East Sea. The *Zhangshui* River flows out of the mountain and runs to the east before it finally empties itself into the Yellow River. (WANG, ZHAO, & CHEN, 2010, p. 97)

In the modern China, people tend to focus on the perseverance of the bird and the justice to repay the debt. Therefore, for such a phrase that carries much information about Chinese culture, readers in the English-speaking countries are indeed supposed to know the connotation of the word "精卫". If the translated version is just "Jingwei", no one would know anything about its cultural correlation. However, if the word is translated by narrating the story, the translated version would be too long to be accepted. Therefore, in this case, componential analysis is adopted to solve the problem and present readers a profound and meaningful story.

Let us take another example, "山膏" (WANG, ZHAO, & CHEN, 2010, p. 164) is translated as "shangao". In the modern China, people seldom know about these legendary animals which have not existed any longer. In *The Classic of Mountain and Seas*, the animal has the features of piglet and its color is red. If we just use the version "shangao" and do not combine it with the context, no informative messages about the animal can be available. In *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*, it is translated like this: "There is an animal called *shangao*

which looks like a piglet and is as red as fire" (WANG, ZHAO, & CHEN, 2010, p. 165). Therefore, if componential analysis is employed, the image would be explicit and vivid. It would be analyzed like this:

Shangao: + red animal + like a pig

In this way, we could not only know the Chinese pronunciation of this word, but also know the features and color of the animal.

Generally speaking, there are items which carry much information about cultures of source language but the translated version is just demonstrating us the Chinese pronunciation. Therefore, nothing about the implied information except its Chinese pronunciation is known. In this case, componential analysis needs to be employed to express the meaning explicitly, which includes the denotation and connotation respectively. For these culture-loaded words, their connotations are the key to intercultural communication. If these words are analyzed comprehensively and accurately, readers in the target language can easily get a deep understanding of the traditional Chinese culture.

Conceptual terms. Peter Newmark mentioned in his *A Textbook of Translation*:

> Note that if a concept-word becomes a key word, i.e., if it is central to a professional non-literary text, it may be useful to analyze the concept componentially in a footnote at its first mention, scrupulously repeating the word at all later citations. (Newmark, 1988, p. 138)

As a professional non-literary text, we are supposed to analyze the concept in a footnote at its first mention. What is more, if the context is taken into consideration, we should add up other layers of meaning in order to make it understood. Take the translation of the word "羊" (WANG, ZHAO, & CHEN, 2010, p. 4) as an example: "There is an animal called boyi which looks like a sheep, but it has nine tails, four ears and two eyes on its back" (WANG, ZHAO, & CHEN, 2010, p. 5). In the previous chapters, the word is interpreted as "ram". However, in latter chapters, the word "公羊" has been also translated as "ram". In this case, the word "ram" conveys different meanings in view of different contexts. That is to say, the word which has different meanings in different contexts is supposed to be analyzed accurately and specifically. Moreover, in this case, slight differences exist in word meaning. Parts of these meanings are overlapping and it is a tough job to tell them apart. However, componential analysis is able to differentiate the nuances of meaning of a word. Therefore, a clear explanation is displayed to us.

Take another example: "跂踵" (WANG, ZHAO, & CHEN, 2010, p. 124) is translated as "qizhong". In the modern China, people explain the word "跂踵" as a movement of human body, which is to tip one's toes. That is to say, the word carries many layers of meaning nowadays. However, in the times when *The Classic of Mountains and Seas* was finished, "跂踵" might just have one or two layers of meaning. As time goes by, "跂踵" has many layers of meaning. In the Classic book of Nan Dynasty, "跂踵" was mentioned to express the meaning of striving for achievement. Moreover, in the Classic book of Song Dynasty, "跂踵" was written to express the meaning of tipping toes. Actually, early in the times when *The Classic of Mountains and Seas* was written, "跂踵" referred to a kind of bird. If someone sees the bird, his country will suffer illness. In the translated version of *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*, this sentence is interpreted as: "There is a bird called qizhong which looks like an owl. It has only one claw and a pig's tail. Wherever it appears, there will be a pestilence" (WANG, ZHAO, & CHEN, 2010, p. 189). Therefore, when words which have many layers of meaning are analyzed, componential analysis is adopted to explain it concisely and accurately. The word "跂踵" could be analyzed as:

Qizhong: + bird + like an owl + one claw + pig's tail + people who see it will have pestilence

For conceptual terms, the denotation serves as the focus to explain. After explicit and accurate interpretation of the denotation and connotation by componential analysis, word meaning could be differentiated. Animal images can be vividly demonstrated to readers of the target language. Besides, conceptual items in *The Classic of Mountains and Seas* have culture-loaded traits. Therefore, when these conceptual terms are interpreted, the very content is in need of consideration. Some of the traits even become the symbols or words that could awaken people's cultural consciousness.

Synonym. During the process of translation, we usually come across another difficulty: Many words seem to be appropriate for items in the source language. The problem occurs as to which one we should choose. Componential analysis would serve as a solution. In the actual process of translation, the word translation of componential analysis could be limited to componential analysis in semantics. Because words in translated version have special meanings, limitations of context for the translated version could not be ignored when componential analysis is adopted.

The employment of componential analysis could interpret relations of words and phrases. Especially in the process of translation, diction for the translated version plays a vital role in the process of translation for choice of synonyms. When componential analysis is adopted, the words or phrases are analyzed. If semantic components of words or phrases are identical, these words or phrases are synonyms. However, if any semantic features of words or phrases are opposite to another word or phrase, words or phrases are antonyms.

Just as what Peter Newmark mentioned in his *A Textbook of Translation*:

> CA can be used to distinguish the meanings of SL cultural sets or series, when their TL "equivalents", even if they have transparently similar names, have widely different functional and or descriptive (substantive) components. This goes back to the origins of CA which was concerned with kinship terms which, being more numerous in developing than in industrialized societies, are most conveniently described through CA-A detailed CA establishes. (Newmark, 1988, p. 111)

That is to say, when we come across synonyms, componential analysis serves as an effective way to distinguish them so as to ensure us a right choice of words for the target language. For instance, in *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*, when it comes to the ending of one chapter, the text usually mentions that: "use a rooster and a pig as the sacrifice" (WANG, ZHAO, & CHEN, 2010, p. 41). In such occasion, "rooster" is adopted to be the corresponding word for "雄鸡". "There are many different kinds of birds, one of which is called *fuyi* and looks like a rooster. It has a human face and is named after its call. Wherever it appears, there will be warfare" (WANG, ZHAO, & CHEN, 2010, p. 36). It is known to all that many expressions are available to convey the animal "鸟", such as "chick, hen, rooster", or even "chicken". The differences could tell from these words. However, after the reason why the sacrifice would be the rooster in the ancient time for a special reason in *The Classic of Mountains and Seas* is found, it is demonstrated that differences of "rooster" and "chicken" can be easily explained by componential analysis. In that way, messages of the source language could be appropriately delivered to the target language.

Take another item "野猪" as an example, in *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*, "野猪" is translated as "pig". "15 *li* further east is a mountain called Quzhu" (WANG, ZHAO, & CHEN, 2010, p. 132). It is known to all that there lie differences between "野猪" and "猪". Although they share many similarities, "野猪" have distinctive features that differentiate from "猪". According to the definition of both of them, physically speaking, "野猪" grows up a little slower than home-raised pigs. "野猪" has tougher fur and darker skin than

home-raised pigs. Moreover, it is known to all that there was no chance of raising pigs at home at the times when *The Classic of Mountains and Seas* was written because no habitants actually lived there. In most cases, the definition of "猪" has included that of home-raised pigs. Therefore, if the translator just employs the word "pig" to substitute "野猪", misunderstanding will occur. The inaccuracy of the version would mislead readers.

Functions in Textual Level

Componential analysis is not only employed to translate cultural sets and series, interpret conceptual terms, and differentiate synonyms. More importantly, it serves as an effective way to find out appropriate culture equivalents and offer us amendments of translated versions. Generally speaking, by employment of componential analysis, animal images will be displayed vividly and componential analysis helps to bridge the gap of culture difference.

For example, when the word "凤凰" (WANG, ZHAO, & CHEN, 2010, p. 16) is interpreted, in the old China, it was regarded as a mythical animal which resembles royalty and eternality and was widely accepted that phoenix could reincarnate from the burned ashes. Therefore, grass-roots respected it and dared not use the word in their daily life because of the royalty it represented. However, in the modern China, if someone is said to be promoted to a fabulous position, she is said to fly high into the branches to be a phoenix.

Moreover, "白鹿" (WANG, ZHAO, & CHEN, 2010, p. 58), in *The Classic of the Western Mountains*, is translated as "white deer". Actually, the white deer in the English speaking countries is different from what is described in *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*. In the old China, white deer had many symbolic meanings. It resembled sincerity and perseverance to nourish someone, even to govern a country. However, in the English-speaking countries, white deer is just a kind of deer that is often seen in the zoo. If the symbolic meaning of white deer cannot be conveyed, the core information of animal image would not be known to readers. The white deer, described *in The Classic of the Western Mountains*, resembles an animal that could bring good luck and blessings to people there, together with *danghu*, which looks like a pheasant and its meat could make people not blink (WANG, ZHAO, & CHEN, 2010, p. 59). Therefore, componential analysis is employed to differentiate the differences and specify denotation and connotation of the animal images. In this case, componential analysis is employed to explain the differences caused by the passage of time.

On the whole, for all animal images in *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*, there are culture-loaded items whose meanings have changed with the passage of time. Therefore, for these items which easily cause misunderstanding, componential analysis is advisable to differentiate them and select the proper layer of meaning so as to present readers an authentic picture of traditional Chinese culture. Therefore, the translated version of *The Classic of Mountains and Seas* could bridge the gap of culture difference.

Cultural equivalent. Many cultural-loaded words have abundant meanings and it is not an easy task to choose an appropriate one. The function of componential analysis is to find out the correspondent word or expression to define the real meaning of items in the source language. Peter Newmark has mentioned in his book that the basic steps of componential analysis are to compare similar expressions so as to get their common sememes and distinctive sememes. However, as the words in the source language carry more layers of meaning than those in the target language, translators usually have to add up other layers of meaning in the target language so as to accord with items in the source language. Therefore, readers in the target language could appreciate more actual and foreign flavor of the source language. That is to say, componential analysis does make great contribution to selecting appropriate culture equivalents for words in source languages.

Usually speaking, a word contains many layers of meaning which includes its denotation and connotation. The thorough expression of its connotation could serve as the key to understanding the meaning in a very context. Based on the research of translation studies, translators usually fail to master what the writer wants to express originally. What is more, they often fail to figure out the nuances of word meaning, which may be exactly the essence of the theme. The reason lies in that they fail to master the actual meaning of English words and phrases. Dating back to the time when they memorized the words, in most cases, they figured out the most frequently used meaning and put it into use when they needed to translate the text. However, they failed to take the appropriate context into consideration. From the perspective of linguistics, translation is the process of trying to figure out a correspondent word in the target language to match the word in the source language. However, the correspondence cannot be perfected. A word has many layers of meaning. However, among them there are several layers of meaning labeled the most important ones, which in most cases are the most distinctive and vital meaning for the word. Therefore, translator would have a deep impression on these meanings, which could be called core members of a word, and overlook other meanings. However, sometimes the overlooked meaning of a word may be the correspondent meaning in view of the context. The most direct reason lies in that we misuse these correspondent relations of words and take it for granted that these meaning should be appropriate to all the contexts. Therefore, the translated version would be difficult to make readers comprehend and the foreign flavor has failed to retain.

For instance, "视肉" (WANG, ZHAO, & CHEN, 2010, p. 278) is translated as "Shirou". In *The Classic of the Great Wilderness*: "The South, There is Mount *Nanlei*. On its top there are jade, green horses, Sanzhui horses, shirou, and sweet-bloom trees. This is where a hundred grains grow" (WANG, ZHAO, & CHEN, 2010, p. 279). However, if readers in the target language come across the word for the first time, they will encounter many difficulties in understanding the expression. In the traditional Chinese cultures, "视肉" is interpreted as a legendary food serving for Empires in the ancient times for it can reprocess again when it is eaten. Dating back to the Qing Dynasty, the Qing Emperor was so eager to be immortal that he visited a famous doctor Xufu to find the elixir. Doctor Xu told him to find a food which can make people immortal. The food is "视肉". Therefore, when the origin and features of this word cannot be figured out, readers in the target language would fail to savor the rich content by its translated version. If the meaning of the word can be translated comprehensively and accurately, features of the animal would be displayed and mythical surroundings would be enriched. Therefore, the word "视肉" is analyzed like this:

Shirou: + legendary food + serving for Empires + making people immortal

In this way, the vital meaning that the writer wants to convey is expressed. Therefore, the meaning of the content in the source language can be fully expressed and understood. The translated version could be more easily accepted by others.

Moreover, in the translation studies, we could not just rely on the references in the dictionary, but more importantly, meaning of the items should be combined with the sentence structures, contents of the text, social surroundings, and cultural backgrounds. Therefore, the meaning of the items in the source language is limited by these factors mentioned above. That is to say, it is advisable to analyze the important items and compare them with context. Finally, the interpretation of the culture-loaded words is defined.

Amendments of translated versions. As the whole text is taken into consideration, the first thing for a good translated version is to understand the text thoroughly and completely. Componential analysis plays an

important role in analyzing words and expressing messages accurately and completely. It serves as an important premise for an excellent translated version.

When the problem of checking out translated versions comes to us, we usually find out the corresponding problematic words and phrases, checking them out by memories that we had long before and deciding whether it is appropriate or not. However, sometimes it is difficult to tell the differences apart. If we do not really go deep into the denotation and connotation of the words, we would fail to savor what the author really wants to say. On the occasion, even if the words are put into the context, we would fail to figure it out.

For instance, for the phrases in *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*, "青鸟" (WANG, ZHAO, & CHEN, 2010, p. 224) and "青蛇" (WANG, ZHAO, & CHEN, 2010, p. 278) are translated into "green bird", "green snake". In *The Classic of the Southern Mountains*, "There is a plant called *zhuyu*, which looks like chives and has green flowers" (WANG, ZHAO, & CHEN, 2010, p. 2). It is known to all that the color "青" is between blue and green. If it is just translated as green, it is inappropriate. However, if this word is taken into the context, we are still puzzled about what the color "青" is like on earth. In this case, if componential analysis is adopted, they can be differentiated. According to *Longman Chinese-English Dictionary*, "青" is translated as "dark blue; something green or young" (WANG, 2011, p. 1299). The reason why the word is translated as so many layers of meaning is that we could encounter many situations and explanations might accord with them. However, in this case, the emphasis is just on its color. Therefore, the corresponding color of "青" should be figured out.

Take the word "猪" (WANG, ZHAO, & CHEN, 2010, p. 132) as another example: in *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*, "猪" has many English versions: piglet, pig, and wild boar. It is known that "piglet, pig, wild boar" are different types of pig. Piglet refers to a young pig (WANG, 2011, p. 1410). Wild boar refers to wild ancestor of the domestic pig (WANG, ZHAO, & CHEN, 2010, p. 176). When the sacrifice is held, usually speaking, piglet is used. Therefore, "猪" is translated as piglet. In the text, when "猪" is seen on the mountain, along with rich deposits of silver, fine and coarse, and whetstones and deer, wild boar is the accurate interpretation of "猪", due to the fact that wild boar is reasonable to be seen on the mountain, instead of domestic pigs. However, in *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*, "野猪" is translated as pig. If "野猪" is not translated as wild boar, it will cause misunderstanding. Therefore, on the whole, a word in the source language has explanations. Words have different meanings in different contexts. In such condition, componential analysis is used to make things explicit.

Take another example, in *The Classic of the Central Mountains*, "There is a bird which looks like a pheasant. It usually eats bedbugs and is called *zhen*" (WANG, ZHAO, & CHEN, 2010, p. 194). "鸩"is translated as "zhen" or "zhen, a legendary poisonous bird". Actually, it can be clearly seen that the second translated version is more appropriate. In the Chapter 8 and 12 of *The Classic of the Central Mountains*, "鸩" is translated as "zhen". However, in the Chapter 8 and 9 of *The Classic of the Central Mountains*, "鸩" is also translated as "zhen, a legendary poisonous bird" (WANG, ZHAO, & CHEN, 2010, p. 175). In this case, the translated version is not in accordance. On the whole, if two translated versions have occurred in the same chapter, it will lead us to go astray. if the word "鸩" is interpreted by componential analysis as "a legendary poisonous bird", it will be easy for us to understand. However, in some translated versions of this word, "zhen" is not clear enough for us to comprehend.

Conclusion

The Classic of Mountains and Seas is an unparalleled classic book of China in Pre-Qin period. It covers

geography, ethnology, religion, medicine, history, mythology, zoology, medicine, etc., which can serve as a treasure to the tremendous Chinese classics. Although it is valuable to study, many obstacles, such as few English translated versions and lack of writers' recordings, have blocked the way. In this thesis, componential analysis is employed to interpret animal images in terms of connotation and denotation.

From what is mentioned above, componential analysis has interpreted the obscure items accurately. However, as a semantic theory, componential analysis is controversial in some aspects. For all the items that are interpreted by componential analysis, there lies a prerequisite that all the semantic components can be explained by componential analysis. However, in the opinions of scholars, such as Katz, Hjelmslev, Pottier, Coseriu, Greimas, Apresjan, Leech, and Lehrer, componential analysis has the feature of weak universality. That is to say, not all the semantic components can be lexicalized in languages. However, the semantic components in lexical meaning of any language lie in the inventory of semantic components. The semantic components of the inventory could be universal, or non-universal. In essence, componential analysis remains as components to convey meaning of items. Therefore, it is easy to understand that componential analysis fails to achieve strong universality.

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