

# The Translation of Neologisms From the Perspective of Eco-Translatology

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Based on relevant theories of eco-translatology, this paper analyzes the translation of neologisms in the English book, *The Money Is Coming* from the perspective of adaptive transformation from three basic dimensions—the linguistic, cultural, and communicative dimensions.

**Keywords:** the translation of neologisms, eco-translatology, adaptive transformation from three dimensions, translation strategy

## Introduction

According to the eco-translatology, translation is a result influenced by multiple factors from different dimensions. The application of eco-translatology theory to the Chinese translation of English neologisms from the perspective of three-dimensional transformation not only provides a new theoretical basis and method for the translation of English neologisms, but also exploits a new interdisciplinary research prospect for translators. This paper will analyze the translation of those neologisms in *The Money Is Coming* from three most basic and important dimensions, namely the linguistic, cultural, and communicative. The original book has 265 pages and was first published in English in 2020 and it was entrusted to me to translate in the same year. This book introduces a brand-new financial management method which is quite different from the traditional one. It is not an academic, serious, philosophical, and narrative method, but the one closer to psychology. Obviously, new concept usually accompanies with a great deal of neologisms. Thus, when translating this book, the first and the hardest part is the translation of those neologisms. In translation, the writer needs to seek help from a lot of information to gain a full understanding before selecting the translation of relevant new words. Since the outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic, the economy continues to slump which has caused mass unemployment. This economic recession may create a tricky situation for the whole society. But, affected by this pandemic, many financial management methods are no longer effective. In order to change this situation and develop the economy, people are badly in need of the appearance of a new route to wealth, while this translation may be able to provide some references. By translating this book, the writer can introduce the latest western financial concepts and methods to China, and spread the public financial knowledge. In addition, the neologisms here refer to three types of new words: The first type includes those untranslated words, newly created words or words that have just been classified into the common vocabulary list; the second type includes those common words which are endowed with new meaning; the third type includes those words which are not popular among all kinds of people but still be used by certain kinds of people.

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### **Introduction to Eco-Translatology**

Eco-translatology is a translation theory proposed by Hu Gengshen. Hu is a famous scholar in China's translation field, the president of the International Association of Eco-Translatology Research, and a renowned professor of Beijing's Tsinghua University. Professor Hu put forward this translation theory of great scientific research value based on his "translation adaptation and selection" studies. Just since the beginning of 21st century, Hu has published many articles on the theory of eco-translatology which have caused wide concern in the academic community of both China and other countries. This new theory combines ecology with translatology. It can be understood as a translation study with an ecological perspective, involving both ecological and translatology concepts.

Translation is the transformation of language while language is a part of culture. Culture is the fruit of human activities, and human beings are a part of nature; humans form, as a member of nature, culture while conduct communication activities. What's more, culture is transmitted through language. Translation is a must for mutual understanding. (Hu, 2010, pp. 64-65)

This interdisciplinary makes a metaphorical analogy between translational eco-environment and ecology. It discusses the relationship between the translator and the translational eco-environment, especially the living conditions and the development model of translation ability of the translator in this environment. It emphasizes the central position of translators. Even different translators may have different cognitive style, and their comprehension of words may also be different for the same new word; translators are still the performer of translation activities. It is translator who makes a choice in this environment. However, the translators could not make choice without any rules; otherwise he will be eliminated by the ecosystem. The translators should make choice based on the whole translation ecosystem. After all, "eco-translatology focuses on the integrity of translation ecosystem ... and makes a new description and explanation of the essence, process, standards, principles and methods of translation" (Hu, 2008a, p. 11). In translation, according to eco-translatology, the principles is adaptive selection and selective adaptation based on the multi dimensions; the process of translation is a cyclic process in which the translator adapts to and chooses from the translation ecology; the method is multi-dimensional transformation, wherein the linguistic, cultural, and communicative dimensions are the most basic three dimensions; the standard is the degree of holistic adaptation and selection (this can be measured by the degree of the multi-dimensional transformation, the competence of the translator, and the feedback from readers). The higher the degree is, the better the translation is.

The traditional translation skills can be seen as the result which stripped from the contrast between the static language and the translational eco-environment or as the translation of single word and single sentence without context. It ignores the "discrepancy" between the language ecology, cultural ecology and communication ecology in the source language ecology and those factors in the target language ecology. In short, it ignores the difference between the eco-environment of the source language and the target language. (Song & Hu, 2016, p. 109)

Thus, translators, as the center of the translation process, should lead the whole translation process. Translator should do things with translation to create a translated text to influence the culture and social of the source language. After all, according to translator-centeredness theory of the eco-translatology, translation is the outcome of the translator's adaptive selections. The translator should make proper adaptive selections from different dimensions (at least from linguistic, cultural, and communicative dimension) according to specific

translation text and translation environment. Also, it is worth point out that those three dimensions are equally important.

The book *The Money Is Coming* is introducing an emerging financial concept. To some degree, it is a brand-new way to get rich that is sprang up in late 21th century in the west world. However, the propaganda of this concept in China is not even worth mentioning. For years, just few Chinese people had little knowledge of it and most of people do not even heard about it. For Chinese people, the financial philosophy in this book is an entirely new idea which may be quite hard to understand or appreciate, let alone those neologisms in this book. Without doubt, this book covers a wide range of neologisms. Even for the writer who translated this book, those new words are difficult to understand. Translating this book to China would involve many factors including human's consciousness, multi dimension factors, and so on. It is quite like the mutual amalgamation of two ecosystems. In order to make this book accepted by more readers, the messages conveyed in it need to integrate into the Chinese environment. Fortunately, the eco-translatology lays stress on the integrity of translation and encourages translators to see the translation as an action of an ecosystem about translation. Besides this, according to the debates from the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI), and the website resources from several major search engines including Sogou, Tencent, Baidu, and Google, a lot of well-known scholars at home and abroad have applied the theory of eco-translatology to a variety of fields of translation practice, including diplomatic discourse translation, traditional culture translation, interpreting studies, business translation, literary translation, comparative methodology of translation, and so on. It has been proved by real practice that eco-translatology can provide strong theoretical guidance for translation practice. For those reasons above, the writer chooses the eco-translatology as a guidance when translating this book.

### **The Translation of Neologisms From the Perspective of Three-Dimensional Transformation**

*The Money Is Coming* is a financial book wrote by Sarah, a rising star of the Internet who has run an online education business for a few years. It introduces the original author's experiences and methods about acquiring wealth. The style of this book is unique, fresh, and natural and the language used is relatively simple, tinted with a flavor of life. However, since it introduces a new way of financial management, there are many economic and psychological terms and neologisms in the book, which are difficult to translate. Under today's Internet economic model, people are now completely living in an era of the Internet for the network technology is increasingly developed. Most things in our life can be done through the Internet. The Internet economy has also become the mainstream of business today. The original book introduces a new way to achieve prosperity and now is spread to China through the Internet. Translating this book could introduce modern western financial philosophy and diffuse the knowledge of public finance with the help of Internet. This chapter will give specific examples to analyze the translation of representative neologisms in the book from the perspective of three-dimensional transformation.

#### **Adaptive Transformation From the Linguistic Dimension**

"Adaptive transformation from the linguistic dimension means that the translator makes adaptive transformation according to the law of the linguistic when translating. This transformation is carried out in different aspects of different levels" (Hu, 2008a, p. 2). English and Chinese have experienced different development courses and belong to completely different language systems. It means that Chinese and English have great differences in many ways like word structure, word connotation and information transmission mode,

and so on. English is a static language that prefers to use noun and preposition but not the verb. In English, prepositions, including simple prepositions, compound prepositions, and phrasal prepositions, are very energetic words. It is frequently used and can often replace the functions of other words. However, Chinese is a kind of dynamic language which prefers to use verb, especially those strong verbs. When translating neologisms, the translator should pay attention to the conversion of part of speech. What's more, though both Chinese and English have the passive voice, those two languages do not share the same frequency of use. Normally, the English tends to use an object thing as subject, showing an objective and neutral attitude. In some specific texts like scientific text, legal text, and other official text, it even forms a custom to use the passive voice. And, the English has formulated strict grammatical form requirements—the passive meaning must be expressed through the change of verb form. It is a syntax marker. As for that of the Chinese, the story is quite different. The Chinese tends to use human as the subject to describe actions and states of people. The Chinese shows passive voice through the characters with passive meaning or through contextual meaning. It is not so strict about the form. It is just a grammatical concept. In addition, in Chinese, the passive voice is usually tinted with the feelings of misfortune, disappointments, be forced, and other negative emotions. Because of this significant difference between those two languages, a large number of passive structures will be translated into active structures in Chinese during the progress of English-Chinese translation. Also, it should be noted that low frequency does not mean that there is no passive voice in Chinese. Thus, when facing this kind of difference, the translator should keep the eyes open on the transformation between the passive and the active. This paper only discusses several major differences between English and Chinese from the linguistic dimension for there is not enough space here. But when translating, the translator should bear all those differences in mind so as to avoid the translationese. Beyond that, in order to achieve an effective translation and to make sure that the translation will not be eliminated in the process of “preservation of strong ones and elimination of weak one”, translators should adapt themselves to the translation ecological environment. Specifically, the translators should fully appreciate the differences between those two languages to fully understand the meaning of the original text and the translation. Then, the translators can start this transformation in different directions and levels. In the original book, there are various Internet terms for the original writer which is an Internet celebrity. In order to maintain the style of writing, the translator should also use Internet language too. However, in China, the Internet language is not the same as the traditional language. The Internet language is concise, vivid, humorous, and eye-catching for the information explosion in the Internet, people's preference to convenience and efficiency, and the character of Chinese parataxis. Normally, a few Internet words can convey the meaning of a few sentences. Therefore, the translator should pay special attention to the succinctness of the translation. For example: “I believe that there is some quite magical, spiritual stuff that goes down when it comes to money—if, that is, you stay positive. You may have heard this referred to as the Law of Attraction or manifesting”. The word “manifesting” in this sentence is one of the most frequent neologisms. The word “manifest” is a verb and “manifesting” is its present participle form. As a verb, the meaning of “manifest” includes: show something very clearly, to appear, to become noticeable; as an adjective, its meaning includes: clearly revealed to the mind, the senses or judgment, easy to see, easy to understand. According to the book, “manifesting” means that someone can think about something and keep it in mind, and then let this thing appear or make it “attracted” by him. For the sake of brevity, this word was translated into a two-character-word—“显露” (xian lu). Although it is also a verb, the same as the original word, it cannot convey what the original one means without any changes. This two-character-word focuses on emphasizing

that the emergence of something is not vague but very clear, obvious, and straightforward. It is not the best option. After all, brevity does not mean that the original text can be distorted at will. Expressing correct information of the source language is the most important thing in translating. Then, this word was translated into “显现” (xian xian), which emphasizes that something appears on its own initiative. However, the word “manifesting” of the original text is more like a concept of metaphysics. It contains a sense of mystery. Though this translation is more consistent with the original meaning, but it could not make readers have mysterious, spiritual, and even magical feelings as the original word does. It is just a simple term, with plain and ordinary meanings. Finally, “manifesting” is translated as “显化” (xian hua). This translation not only has the same meaning as the original text, but also has the meaning of the appearance of gods. In a sense, it could add mystery. This concise expression expresses both the meaning and the romantic charm of the original text.

### **Adaptive Transformation From the Cultural Dimension**

Adaptive transformation from the cultural dimension means that the translator should pay attention to the transmission and interpretation of cultural connotation when translating. This adaptive choice requires translators to pay attention to the differences between the nature and content of the source culture and that of the target culture, to avoid misinterpreting the original text under the influence of the target culture. The translator should show solicitude for the whole cultural system behind the language. (Hu, 2008a, p. 2)

Every language is an act of culture for language and culture are inextricably linked. The primary purpose of translation is to build bridges between different languages and cultures to achieve communication. If the reader cannot understand the translation, the translation will not obtain expectant efficiency, nor achieve the established goal—communication. In other words, when translating, translators should not only pay special attention to language problems, but also pay attention to the cultural differences hidden behind the language to overcome the obstacles caused by cultural differences. Therefore, in order to transmit information smoothly and achieve the translation purpose of cultural exchange, the translator can cater to the target culture and modify the original text appropriately while respecting the original text. For instance: “On the other hand, I am obsessed with spirituality, astrology, crystals—you name it”. The “crystals” in this sentence does not look like a new word for it has been translated into many terms already. However, with close reading, it would be easy to find out that those existing translations cannot convey the original information well. In the original text, the “crystals” is juxtaposed with “spirituality” and “astrology”. Obviously, this word does not only represent crystal, a kind of mineral, but also implies a deeper meaning. For Chinese, the crystal is brilliant and transparent. Their cognition of crystal is more from the perspective of appreciation. Many Chinese writers and poets in the past and the present have praised the beauty of crystal, while, in the west world, the crystal is endowed with a certain religious significance. The west believes that these crystals have magic and can be used in divination, forecasting the future, and other things. That is a phenomenon of cultural default. If this cultural information is not added when translating, some readers may not understand the relationship between crystal and religion, which may lead to misunderstanding. Then the adaptive transformation of cultural dimension would not be realized. Hence, in order to achieve the purpose of transmitting the cultural connotation of the original text, the translator should adopt amplification. In other word, the translator should add some cultural background of crystal properly to point out the practical use of crystal to achieve adaptive transformation from the cultural dimension well. Another typical example is: “Although I’m not gonna lie, I’m totally into that now—Palo Santo for the win”. The “Palo Santo” in this sentence is a word that most people are unfamiliar with.

The original book does not provide any more explanation about in its context. The only thing that the original author has provided is that the Palo Santo is something with magic. The writer searches it in the Internet and finds more details about it. The so-called Palo Santo is a kind of tree, growing in the rain forest of the southern United States. The wood itself has a sweet and deep aroma, which is a very natural material for aromatherapy. The smoke generated by lighting this kind of wood can be used to demagnetize crystal jewelry, purify the space, help release pressure and anxiety, increase the energy, relax the mind and body, and help people to drop more deeply into meditation. According to some legend, when the Spanish monks discovered this kind of charming wood and its ability to clean and heal, they named the tree “Palo Santo”. In Europe, it is also known as “holy wood”, a very mysterious tree. It is said that, in the eyes of Shaman, the wise man in the ancient legend who could perceive everything with the help of nature, this kind of tree was a holy tree with magic. The Shaman often burned the woods from this holy tree to perform the ceremony before some significant events. Thus, the west world normally holds the view that burning this wood may clear all negative energy and create a sacred protective field that can help connect with those high spirits, like gods. However, there is no similar tree like this in China. For most Chinese people, they would not even hear of it. Indeed, there is aromatherapy in China. But its function is more inclined to help people improve mood and decrease stress. It basically has nothing to do with magic. Only the incense used in religious observances shares some similar but not the same function and usage method with this Palo Santo. In short, there is no cultural equivalence as a matter of this tree. It is a culture-gap word. For this reason, if the translator adopted the transliteration method, readers may not understand what it is. The translator should fill this culture gap when translating this word. The writer translates this word as “圣木” (sheng mu). In Chinese, the character “圣” (sheng) has the meaning of “sacred thing with magic” while the character “木” (mu) has both the meaning of “tree” and the meaning of “woods”. These two characters together could express the accurate and appropriate meaning of the original word by using the target language. At the same time, the term “圣木” (sheng mu) is not a term fabricated by the writer. It is a Chinese word, which means sacred wood in ancient legends. Generally speaking, this translation conveys the original information and refills the cultural vacancy at the same time.

### **Adaptive Transformation From the Communicative Dimension**

Adaptive transformation from the communicative dimension means that in addition to the transformation of language information and the transmission of cultural connotation, the translator should also focus on communication and pay special attention to whether the communicative intention in the original text is reflected in the translation. (Hu, 2008a, p. 3)

One of the purposes of translation is to achieve communication, the expected communicative purpose. A successful translation could not only let the readers understand the meaning of the words and sentences conveyed, but also could help the original author achieve his goal in another language. For example: “Sarah reached success when she launched her online education business, the No Bull Business School, and started documenting her journey to financial success”. “The No Bull Business School” in this sentence is translated into “务实商学院” (wu shi shang xue yuan). This translation fits well with rule of the adaptive transformation of communicative dimension. In the original book, “the No Bull Business School” is the name of the online education institution operated by the author of the original book. It is a new and untranslated name. The institution is also one of the means of livelihood of the original author. In order to grab the attention of potential students and let more people know this school, the original author chose a name that was easy to understand and catchy. When translating, the translator should bear this in mind. In China, the name “business school” is

often translated into “商学院” (shang xue yuan), just like the famous “Harvard Business School”. What’s more, this translation of the “business school” also has a high recognition among readers. It not only completely conveys the meaning of the original text, but also may not lead to the misunderstanding on the part of the readers. The words “no bull” are very intuitive and succinctly express the meaning of seeking truth from facts without boasting, filling the gap between the school and readers, and giving readers a real feeling. When translating, the translator needs to maintain this expression effect to achieve this communicative purpose. Finally, the “no bull” is translated into “务实” (wu shi). It is a commendatory Chinese term, which is easy to arouse positive association. Moreover, this term is highly accepted by readers and often appears in some frequently used phrases or four-character structure. It’s one of the most common terms. In a word, the translation of “the No Bull Business School” not only completely transmits the information of the original text, but also achieves the communicative purpose of the original text. It could attract others’ attention and obtain good communication effect. For another example: “I went on to Facebook and scrolled through my news-feed until I found someone who was raising money on JustGiving”. The “JustGiving” in this sentence is a name of an UK charity website. In this website, people can choose to donate for a charity in the UK. More specifically, people can write their own “stories” on this website to explain why they want to help this charity and set up target donation and timeliness. After that, the story teller can mobilize friends to donate through this website. Also, some netizens may be touched by the story to donate. It is a new donation method, quite like the Shuidichou of China. Though this website is not a newly created one, it has not established worldwide awareness. At least in China, it is not so commonly known that it is a website that can raises money for different donations and projects. Also, this website does not have a uniform Chinese translation name. In this translation, if the translator uses literal translation, or even word for word translation, the original meaning could be maintained but no one can understand what actually this is. The purpose of translation is to achieve communication. In translation, if information does not play a communicative role, it is useless. In order to achieve effective communion with every reader, the translator should let the readers understand what the translation refers to and leave no doubts and obscurities to the reader. Thus, when translating this name, the writer adopts the method of interpretation and adds annotations within the text. The translation is “英国慈善网站JustGiving” (ying guo ci shan wang zhan JustGiving). This translation points out the function of this website and the country it belongs to directly within the translation. It’s easy for all readers to understand in their first glance. Besides this, this translation adopts the non-translation method at the same time. It’s a good option. If the name “JustGiving” was translated into Chinese, most readers may not able to match this Chinese name with the original name. After all, even the word for word translation would cause a certain degree of losses. And those losses are a brake on the translation backstepping. But, if remaining it untranslated, the readers could find the match easier. And the readers could also search more information about it with their own efforts if they wanted to. In a word, translators should also try their best to let the readers understand the translation, so as to fulfill the goals of successful communication of the original text.

### Conclusion

Normally, traditional translation theories only study translation from a certain point of view. Unlike it, the eco-translatology, considering all factors, starts its research from the environment of translation ecosystem. According to eco-translatology, translation is seen as a creative and selective activity carried out by translators to adapt to the whole translation ecological environment. But, like all ecological environments, the translation

ecological environment is not constructed by just one element from one dimension, nor is it only affected by one factor. The composition of translation ecological environment and its influencing factors are complex and diverse, including non-human factors such as social, political, and cultural factors, as well as human factors such as readers, critics, and publishers. Among all those factors and dimensions, culture, language, and communication are the three key points recognized by the translation field and are the focus of translation theorists. Those dimensions are the most important thing when translating. To some extent, language, culture, and communication are interrelated and interdependent, which reflects the internal content of translation transformation.

Therefore, when we emphasize one dimension and one element for the sake of description, it does not mean that other dimensions and other elements do not play a role in the translation process. As a matter of fact, in a real translation process, linguistic, cultural, communicative, and other factors are often intertwined, interconnected and interactive. Sometimes those factors are difficult to be completely separated. (Hu, 2006, p. 50)

Although the writer analyses the three dimensions of language, culture, and communication separately in the above examples, in fact, each example is the result of comprehensive consideration and adaptation. In practical translation, any good translation is not the result of one-dimensional adaptation. Thus, in order to present the literal meaning and the figurative meaning of the source language in a natural and clear language and make the target language readers understand the translation at their first glance, translators could use different translation methods in specific translation from the cultural dimension, language dimension, and communicative dimension. The translators should adapt to the translation ecological environment and achieve multi-dimensional adaptation and transformation until the best translation is achieved. Only by realizing multidimensional adaptation (or at least three-dimensional selection transformation) can translation survive in the process of survival of the fittest; only when the translation is accepted by the translation ecology, can the translator live in the translation ecological environment. According to the concept of “post-event penalty”, only those translations that adapt to the translation ecological environment can finally “survive”.

What’s more, it is impractical to provide an accurate translation for all neologisms once and for all. The translation of neologisms needs to be constantly updated and improved. Thus, even the writer believes that all those translations above are the most appropriate option, there may still be some incomplete aspects. What a translator should do when translating neologisms is to step importantly with the times to improve the translation constantly. After all, translation could also evolve in the ecosystem of translation. Besides this, when translating those neologism, the first thing that a translator should do is to get an idea of the relatively cultural background. The social background and the cultural origins behind are very important to understanding the meaning of a word. Although some translators may have a vague notion of some new words, as a matter of fact, they basically know nothing when it comes to the details. Thus, every translator should take some time to search in the Internet to understand the background information about the neologisms.

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