The Translator's Adaptation and Selection in the Approach to Translation as Adaptation and Selection –Based on the Three English Versions of *San Zi Jing* from Linguistic Dimension

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Abstract: *San Zi Jing* is an extremely popular and representative classic among children's books of traditional Chinese society's enlightenment, with its short form, beautiful rhythm and profound meaning. Its foreign translations have become a crucial medium for spreading Chinese culture around the world. Based on the Approach to Translation as Adaptation and Selection, this paper presents a comparative analysis of three English versions of *San Zi Jing* by Herbert Allen Giles, Wang Baotong, and Zhao Yanchun. Firstly, by comparing the internal and external environments of the three translators, their selective adaptations to the specific ecological environment of translation are elucidated. Secondly, combined with the analysis of some typical cases, this paper probes the adaptive selections of translators from three levels of linguistic dimension, namely phonologically, lexically and syntactically, and evaluates three versions respectively. The results show that Zhao and Wang are far better than Giles in phonology, with Zhao being the best. In terms of vocabulary, Zhao excels in selecting the most accurate words. Seen from syntactic structure, Giles' and Zhao's versions have various sentence patterns, while that of Wang follows the regular one. On the whole, Zhao's version has a higher overall degree of adaptation and selection than Giles' and Wang's versions. The present study is of some theoretical and practical value. It helps readers have a better understanding for production of the three different versions and arouses the attention on the ideational level of language in the process of Chinese classics translation.

Keywords: Translation as Adaptation and Selection; translational eco-environment; adaptation and selection; *San Zi Jing*; linguistic dimension

1. Introduction

As one of the most important primers for elementary education in China, *San Zi Jing* is a classic based on Confucian principles, Chinese history, and the philosophy of life in ancient China. The original work has gained considerable fame in all ages for its rich ideas and profound cultural implications, while translations published in different languages have widely spread the wisdom and spirit of ancient China across the globe. As China's international status has advanced in recent years and the exchange of world cultures has increased, traditional Chinese culture has attracted much more attention worldwide. More foreigners are learning about *San Zi Jing*, one of the classics that mirror Confucian ideas and culture. The great classic covers a vast range of knowledge, including education, philosophy, ethics, Chinese history and some of the basics of Chinese culture. It has become an important medium for foreigners to learn Chinese and Chinese culture.

Against such special background of cultural melting pot, the research of the English versions of *San Zi Jing* has drawn more attention of some researchers, who go into this great work from various perspectives. As to the former researches on the English translation of *San Zi Jing*, reviews can be divided into the following five categories. The first category is an introduction of the English translated versions of *San Zi Jing*. For example, directed by theory of descriptive translation, Zheng divided the history of English translation of *San Zi Jing* into three stages, and then analyzed translated versions, translation purpose and translation style of every stage respectively in detail [1]. The second one researches the translation strategies, skills, motivation and style of the English translation. Based on Eugene Nida's equivalence theory and the translation strategies of foreignization and domestication, Liu compared three English versions to probe into the way in which the translation strategies of foreignization and domestication exert influence on the transmission of source language culture and the establishment of equivalence in the target language text. She advised that the translators should combine the two translation strategies together and take the translation purpose and the readers' acceptability into account [2]. The third one is to comparatively study the translations to know which translation is faithful to the original text. For example, Yu made a comparative study of English translations of *San Zi Jing*, based on Giles' and Zhao Yanchun's English Versions, mainly focusing on translation of the vocabulary, sentences, rhyme and annotation [3]. The fourth one is to analyze one or more English versions from different perspectives. For example, by making a comparative study of the translation of the from the perspective of

hermeneutics, Zhou analyzed what degree the two translated versions are faithful to the source text in meaning and how they preserve the stylistic features of the original text [4]. The conclusion is that J.Lau's version exceeds that of Giles both in content and in form. Zeng analyzed the two English versions of the *San Zi Jing* from the point of poetics, Giles' and Wang Baotong's versions [5]. This thesis mainly discussed that the translators should preserve the literariness of the source text and convey the traditional Chinese culture and philosophic thoughts faithfully. Based on Chesterman's five models of translation ethics, Zhang discussed the performance of the chosen two versions from each ethical perspective [6]. The last one is to provide suggestions that we should have, for example, cultural awareness from the translation. By exemplifying Zhao Yanchun's English version of *San Zi Jing*, Zhu provided the idea that we should have our cultural awareness in the translation of Chinese classics into foreign languages [7].

From the above, most of the previous researches mainly concentrate on a certain theory or translation strategies from the micro-level to study English translation of *San Zi Jing*. Few of them pay heed to the important role that the translator plays in the process of translation and study the work from the macro-level of Translation as Adaptation and Selection. This paper will focus on the translational eco-environment and analyze how the three translators adapt to specific translational eco-environment and make their own adaption and selection. At the same time, adaptive selections will be analyzed through comparing the three English versions of *San Zi Jing* from the approach of language use. The chosen three English versions are respectively quoted from *Elementary Chinese: San Tzu Ching* translated by Herbert Allen Giles (hereafter referred as Giles) [8], *The Triword Primer* by Wang Baotong (hereafter referred as Wang) [9] and *The Three Word Primer* by Zhao Yanchun (hereafter referred as Zhao) [10].

2. Translator's Adaptation and Selection in the Translation Adaptation and Selection Theory

Translation as Adaptation and Selection is a basic theory in eco-translatology started in the early 21st century. Along with the rapid development of the theory in recent twenty years, it has applied in several translation researches. The founder Professor Hu Gengshen borrows Darwinian principles of "natural selection" and "survival of the fittest" and applies it into the translation study. The theory focuses on the integrity of the translational ecosystem and lays more emphasis on translator's domination. It defines translation as a kind of selection activity for translators to adapt to translational eco-environment. A translational eco-environment refers to the worlds of the source text and the source/target languages, comprising the linguistic, communicative, cultural and social aspects of translating, as well as the author, the client, and the readers. The process of translating is a production of target texts by natural selection by means of the translator's adaptation to the eco-environment and the translator's selection of both the degree of the adaptation and decisions about the form of the final target text [11].

Two stages of adaptation and selection in the translating process could be illustrated in the following figure [12]:
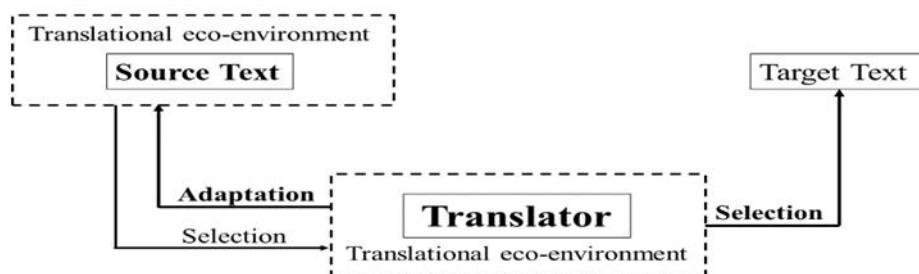

Figure 1 Two stages of adaptation and selection in the translating process

In the first stage, the source text, as a typically important element of the translational eco-environment, selects the translator, reversibly, that is, translator's adaptation to the source text in translational eco-environment. In the second stage, the translator in translational eco-environment selects and makes decisions about the form of the final target text. It is quite clear that the translator plays a central role in adaptation to environment of the source text and selection for environment of the target text in the process of translation. Thus, translator's adaptation is to adapt the world (translational eco-environment) of the source text, the source language and the target language; translator's selection is to select the degree of adaptation to the translational eco-environment and the form of the final target text [13]. Thus, in the process of translation, the centrally located translator has to take into various elements of translational eco-environment consideration, covering the author of original text, original text, target text, the readers of the translated texts and so on. In addition, the translator is required to make some decisions for adaptive transformation so that his or her translation not only should be capable of reliving features of the source text, but also should adapt to language and cultural custom of target readers to achieve communicative intentions.

3. Selective Adaptations in the Three English Translators of *San Zi Jing*

As mentioned above, the first stage of translation process is that translational eco-environment (source text as its representative element) selects the translator, so the translational eco-environment of *San Zi Jing* chooses Herbert Allen Giles, Wang Baotong and Zhao Yanchun as translators of each version. In reverse, this is actually a selective

adaptation of the translators to the translational eco-environment out of their own instincts. It is worthwhile here to discuss the instinctive adaptations and selections of the translators. The instinct of the translator implies a subconscious and innate ability to adapt and select at the most basic level, including the translator's judgment of the translated version, adaptation to the translated environment, pursuit of quality of life and the like, covering several aspects, ranging from the internal to the external environment. The internal environment refers to personal factors such as the translator's upbringing, educational experience, bilingualism, translation practice, etc. External circumstances mean that translators should be geared to political, historical, social and other external elements. The following part will focus on the adaptation of the translators to the internal and external environments of the three translators.

3.1 Giles' selective adaptations

Viewed from the inner environment of Giles, Giles' adaptations are mainly represented in two aspects: the first one is interest and passion; the second one is extensive knowledge of language and culture both in English and Chinese. Above all, interest and passion are driving force of Giles' tireless effort for translating Chinese classical works. Obsessed with Chinese culture, he had the indissoluble bond with *San Zi Jing*. He first came to Beijing in 1867 as an English interpreter in China, and then began to attend a two-year Chinese training course organized by the British government. At that time, he chose *San Zi Jing* as his first Chinese learning text. He maintains that this book not only has an enlightening effect on children in China, but also is a good elementary Chinese learning material for foreign beginners, especially for those who long for mastering written Chinese or developing the way of thinking in Chinese. So, he showed a great deal of interest in this book for its educational function, eager to introduce it to Western readers for learning Chinese at that time. Later, Giles set out to translate *San Zi Jing*, responding to his emotional need. In addition, excellent bilingual and bicultural competence are the prerequisite for his translation of Chinese classics. Giles was born in 1845 at a literary family in Oxford, England. Good edification in culture and art helped him develop a strict British style. Thus, as a native Englishman, he has a proficient mastery of English language and culture in English-speaking countries. At the same time, he was also a British sinologist professor at Cambridge University, which is counted as the highest honor in the field of sinology research. Rich bilingual translation practice made him have enough familiarity with Chinese culture, especially Confucian culture. He is engaged all his life in Chinese teaching and research, so he competently solves problems which target readers may encounter during reading English translations. He is undoubtedly one of the best candidates to translate *San Zi Jing* at that time.

From the perspective of outer social environment, Giles produced second version of *San Tzu Ching* coinciding with sinology boom in the context of British invasion against China, which is adaptation to the translational eco-environment at that time. As the economic and diplomatic benefits of China had been increasingly expanding, British government needed to send a host of British people who know Chinese to China, often known as "China hands", so as to consolidate its interests in China. Giles was one of them. They were sedulously bound up in translating Chinese literary works and published a multitude of influential monographs and translations on sinology. Then, they directly applied research achievements on sinology into foreign policy making of the country. Thus, Giles was adaptive to social background at that time to produce his second version.

3.2 Wang's selective adaptations

When it comes to Wang's adaptation to the internal environment, he undoubtedly adapts to own interest in poetry and high proficiency in both Chinese and English. First of all, interest and deep love for Chinese poems, especially rhythm, drive him to improve his translation of *San Zi Jing* over and over again. He is fond of poetry and he takes delight in translating poems. He had been asking himself whether it can be translated with three English words for three Chinese characters as much as possible. In the following days, he slowly savored the enjoyment of polishing till he published *The Triword Primer* in 2008. This version is counted as the first coupling rhyme translation of *San Zi Jing* till the emergence of Zhao's translation. It is his outstanding character of daring attempt, daring challenge and daring innovation that led to the magic of translation. In addition, brilliant bilingual and bicultural capacity made him a modern renown expert in poetry translation. His main study focuses on English poetry, phonology and poetry translation. With great gift in translating poems, he has made pain-staking efforts in doing the nearly impossible to translate many Chinese classics into English, especially Wang Wei's poems. His name was included in the 17th edition of Dictionary of International Biography by International Biographical Center. With his intelligence and diligence, he has made great contribution to bringing the gems of Chinese literature to the West.

From outer environment, Wang's adaptation to the ecological environment of translation is closely related to the political environment at that time. Early 21st century, with the progress and development of China, the western society is becoming more and more enthusiastic about learning Chinese. Our government is committed to exporting Chinese culture to every corner of the world. Now Confucius Institutes have spread all over the world, spreading the profound Chinese culture. As a splendid treasure of Chinese traditional culture, it is very necessary to translate and export *San Zi Jing*.

3.3 Zhao's selective adaptations

As for internal environment of Zhao, his adaptations derive from love for traditional Chinese culture, strong cultural awareness and outstanding translator quality. Firstly, Zhao's adaptations are firmly rooted in a sense of strong cultural awareness and cultural confidence, which is exactly what the current translation circle needs and lacks in the translation of Chinese classics into foreign languages [7] [14]. He has been committed to the research and translation of Chinese classics, among which are closely related with Chinese traditional culture. He is inclined to translating from Chinese to English instead of English to Chinese, which reflects his strong consciousness of text selection. That is to say, he pays more heed to export of Chinese culture. More importantly, he consistently adheres to standard of translation. Zhao's translations of Chinese classics closely follow the original in both form and content and fully consider audience awareness of Chinese readers. Chinese culture and Chinese readers' mode of thinking are being prioritized in his translation. What's more, equipment with excellent language use capacity, cross-cultural sensibility and background knowledge in Chinese and English laid a solid foundation for Zhao to translate *San Zi Jing* into English and introduce it to Western readers. As a special kind of poems, *San Zi Jing*, its English translation poses a huge challenge for translators. Although quite a few scholars at home and abroad have translated *San Zi Jing*, none of them could really retain the "three characters per line" characteristics and represent style of the original. Thus, Zhao's *The Three Word Primer* has won a high praise for real faithfulness to the original in both form and meaning, particularly in rhyme. Xinhua News Agency even hailed it as "the most beautiful Chinese-English translation of all time". So, it can be seen that Zhao Yanchun instinctively improved his own competence and produced a more successful English version of *San Zi Jing*. That is to say, translation task of *San Zi Jing* exactly accords with his competence.

Viewed from external environment, his cultural awareness was deeply rooted in political environment at that time, which has something to do with the national strategy of introducing Chinese culture to the world and reconstructing Chinese discourse system [14]. Literary works contains cultural elements and embodies cultural phenomenon in reality. Thus, "Chinese literature going global" is an important component of "Chinese culture going global". It is of great significance to make the world know and understand culture, history and tradition of China through the spread of literature [15]. The foreign translation of Chinese classics is essential to the transmission of Chinese culture. However, current translations so far are not satisfactory in the form of language, ideological content and cultural connotation [16]. In the contradiction between the best period for the external dissemination of Chinese classics and poor translation quality at this point, it is particularly important to reexamine the out-translation of Chinese classical works. Therefore, Zhao produced the rhymed English version of *The Three Word Primer*, which adapts to political element of translational eco-environment and conforms to the requirement of the era in foreign translation of Chinese literary works.

4. Adaptative Selections from Linguistic Dimension in the Three English translators of *San Zi Jing*

As Newmark says, "[t]ranslation theory is concerned with choices and decisions, not with the mechanisms of either the source language text… or the target language text" [17]. It is noteworthy how the translator makes selections in translation process. By and large, selections of translators should take different dimensions and levels into consideration throughout the process of translation. Actually, due to complexity of translation process, such factors as language, culture, communication, society and so on, can often be woven together with each other, sometimes difficult to completely separate one from another. Comparatively speaking, linguistic dimension is the most common and also essential aspect of transformation. Three translators of *San Zi Jing* make adaptive selections and transformations of linguistic dimension in different levels. Thus, the following part will concentrate upon analyzing by examples how three translators of *San Zi Jing* make adaptive selections in linguistic dimension from three levels, namely phonology, vocabulary and syntactical structure. ST in the following tables stands for source text, TT for target text.

4.1 The Level of Phonology

Phonology in linguistics studies how sounds are put together (sound patterns) and used to convey meaning in communication. *San Zi Jing*, as it was produced in ancient China, when the study of phonology is highly prosperous and rigorous, rhymes in every other line from the beginning to the end, with three Chinese characters per line and four lines a group. The widespread use of rhymes makes *San Zi Jing* diverting and full of sound beauty. The whole text adopts the most commonly used end rhyme scheme in traditional Chinese poetry (AABA) or rhymes in every other line (ABAB). It is these distinctive features that highly enhance readability of *San Zi Jing*, leaving more space for readers to savor and ruminate over it. Thus, translation for rhyming lines asks translators for endowing with profound knowledge in both Chinese and English literature. The level of phonology contains a rich emotional state meaning, cultural significance, subjective motivation and social identity. Below are some excerpts of *San Zi Jing* respectively chosen from Giles', Wang's and Zhao's translated texts. It is not difficult for us to see the difference among the three versions on phonological aspect.

ST	TT of Giles	TT of Wang	TT of Zhao
人之初,	Men at their birth,	At first **mankind**	Man on **earth**,

ST	TT of Giles	TT of Wang	TT of Zhao
性本善。	are naturally good.	Is kind at heart,	Good at **birth**.
性相近，	Their natures are much the same;	With natures **alike**	The same nature
习相远。	their habits become widely different.	But habits apart.	Varies on nurture.

Table 1: Example 1 of Phonological Level

ST	TT of Giles	TT of Wang	TT of Zhao
玉不琢，	If the jade is not polished,	Unless being carved	No jade **crude**
不成器。	It will become a thing of use.	The jade is nothing **more**.	Shows craft **good**.
人不学，	If a man does not learn,	Unless well taught,	Unless you learn,
不知义。	He cannot know his duty towards his neighbor.	Your mind is **raw**.	Brute you'll turn.

Table 2: Example 2 of Phonological Level

As Table 1 and Table 2 show above, Giles is no match for Wang and Zhao in terms of rhyme between the translation and the original text because he almost chooses to translate *San Zi Jing* into prose style and turns a blind eye on the rhyming lines. The absence of rhyme in Giles' translation deprives his readers of proper literature appreciation of the great work, accordingly making it a dull teaching material.

Compared with Giles, Wang applies poetic form more often trying to preserve the neat lines of *San Zi Jing* and insists on alternate rhyming "ABAB" just like the original text, seeing from the consonances "mankind" and "alike", "heart" and "apart", "more" and "raw" in his translation above. In this way, he has achieved good adaptation in rhyme. Nevertheless, in Wang's target text, the word number of every line varies, generally ranging from two to six. Undoubtedly, his translated version is unfit with the form of the original text, that is, three characters of every line. The target text of Zhao, however, is applied with "AABB" rhyme schemes ("earth" and "birth"; "nature" and "nurture"; "crude" and "good"; "learn" and "turn"), with the short and simple text arranged in three-word verse, which can be seen as a middle form between "AABA" and "ABAB" [14]. The same structure and word length with the original text give expression to perfect adaptation to eco-environment of the source text, which can be considered as the closest imitation to the original work both in sound and meaning.

Sometimes, of course, the assignment of rhymes can be reversible, depending on the content of the source text. In other words, to achieve rhyme, the translator can change the order of words without destroying their meaning or creating ambiguity. Let us turn to the next example.

ST	TT of Giles	TT of Wang	TT of Zhao
魏蜀**吴**，	Wei, Shu, and Wu,	Wei, Shu, and Wu,	Shuh, Woo, **Weigh**
争汉鼎。	fought for the sovereignty of the Hans.	For power **contended**.	Struggled their **way**;
号三**国**，	They were called the Three **Kingdoms**,	Till the Three Kingdoms period	Three kingdoms reared;
讫两晋。	and existed until the two Chin **dynasties**.	By Jin was **ended**.	Two Jins appeared.

Table 3: Example 3 of Phonological Level

In Table 3, seeing from "吴(w**u**) " and "国(g**uo**)", "鼎(d**ing**)" and "晋(j**in**)" in the source text, the original author employs interlaced rhyme, that is, ABAB. On the phonological level, there appears to be rhyme in the translation of Giles. The last words of the third and the fourth lines end with [s], but "ABCC" is very rare in traditional English poems. Likewise, Wang also attempts to preserve the original rhyme style, yet only rhyme in "contended" and "ended". Thus, strictly speaking, neither of them succeeds in retaining the rhyme and word length of the source text. In contrast to Giles and Wang, Zhao handled the problem deftly. Since there is no clear logical connection among "魏", "蜀" and "吴", he tactfully reverses this order. "Weigh" was placed at the end of the sentence to rhyme with "way" to form Repetition with /weɪ/ completely repeated. What's more, "Woo" and "Weigh" forms Alliteration, instead of "Shuh" next to "Weigh". Similarly, "r**eared**" and "app**eared**" also rhyme, both ending with [ɪəd]. So, Zhao still utilizes "AABB" rhyming scheme and keeps characteristic of three-character per line in this section as well.

San Zi Jing is compact, vivid, and easy to understand and recite, and so should its English translation, otherwise the true meaning that the original intended to convey would not be well conveyed. From the above analysis, it can be seen that Zhao does a better job in adapting to the source text, both in terms of form and rhyme. In selecting target texts,

Gilles is more concerned with the feelings of foreign readers, mostly employing the translation strategy of literal translation plus explanation, while Wang tends to preserve the literary features of the translation.

4.2 The Level of Vocabulary
Word is treated as the minimum free form in English language. In translating a work from Chinese to English, the choice of vocabulary is of great importance. For one thing, it not only presents subjective comprehension of translators for real meaning of the source text. For another, it embodies adaptations to environment of translated text, care for readers horizon of expectation and reveals different selections of translators for the target text. The following two examples excerpted from the three English versions can elaborate different degrees of adaptation and selection of translators in lexical level.

ST	TT of Giles	TT of Wang	TT of Zhao
融四岁，	Jung, at four years of age,	And, Rong, only four,	Aged four years,
能**让**梨。	could **yield** the (bigger) pears.	**Picked** the smallest pear,	Rong **proffered** pears.
弟于长，	To behave as a younger brother towards elders	To leave his elders	Bear in mind
宜先知。	is one of the first things to know.	The lion's share.	Fraternally be kind.

Table **4**: Example 1 of Vocabulary Level

ST	TT of Giles	TT of Wang	TT of Zhao
曰**仁义**，	We speak of charity of justice and of duty towards one's neighbor,	Be righteous, kind,	Grace, justice, courtesy,
礼智信。	of propriety, of wisdom, and of truth.	Faithful, polite,	Wisdom, and fidelity.
此五常，	These five virtues	And use your mind-	Good order derive
不容紊。	admit of no compromise.	Good virtues quite.	From Constants Five.

Table **5**: Example 2 of Vocabulary Level

In Table 4, three translators adopt different words in translating the Chinese character "让". Zhao chooses "proffered", which means to offer something to somebody, by holding it out to them [18]. This word vividly emphasizes that Rong takes the initiative to give elder brother a bigger pear, rather than passively. However, "yield" in Giles' translation cues us that he is just forced to give pears. "Picked" that Wang employs also cannot express the implicit meaning because this word can be classified into a neutral word and fails to embody Rong's virtue.
For the next sentence, Giles employs full eight words, "To behave as a younger brother towards elders", yet he fails to translate the practical implication of "弟于长", that is, the deference and obedience of a younger brother to an older brother. What's more, the semantics of the word "behave" are broad and general, not corresponding to the spirit of the original text. Giles translates "先知" in "宜先知" into the noun phrase "first things", meaning "things you should know from a young age". Also, the plural form of "things" indicates that "things you should know from a young age" are more than "弟于长", which can be associated with "亲师友", "孝于亲" and other parenting behaviors, but at the same time reduces the information sensitivity of "弟于长". In contrast, both Wang and Zhao adopt more flexible translation. As we can see, "To leave his elders, /The lion's share" by Wang, hails from Aesop, contributing to have a better understanding of the virtue of humility for readers, especially foreign ones. In Zhao's translation, "Bear in mind, / Fraternally be kind", denotative meaning of "fraternally" involves not only elder brother to younger brother but younger brother to elder brother, that is relating to brothers, which seems to contradict the original text. Still, selecting the word "fraternally" adds a sense of equality beyond brotherhood, and more importantly, educates children about the interdependent relationship between brothers.
In Table 5, "五常" refers to five abstract nouns in the original text, "仁义礼智信", and their order should not be changed, so English translation is also suitable with this. Giles' "These five virtues / admit of no compromise" just emphasizes on the importance of "五常", but does not translate the meaning of "their order should not be disturbed". Wang not only reverses the order of "五常", also translates "智" into verbal phrase "use your mind". In contrast, Zhao's translation is a variation on the original text. The word "order" not only indicates the order of "五常", but also means metaphorically that the stability of social order derives from "五常", which can be regarded as a pun, achieving a better translation effect. Besides, translation of "仁" also remains to be discussed. "Charity" by Giles only can refer to one aspect of "仁爱", narrowing its semantic scope and making semantic logic too general. "Kind" by Wang can be

regarded as a translation of the basic meaning of "仁爱". "Grace" in Zhao's translation, however, has more profound implications: "grace" means "kindness", which conforms to the standard of "仁爱"; in addition, "grace" also has the meaning of "God's kindness that is shown to people", which is associated with Western Christian culture and is easy for the target language readers to generate similar associations.

All these mistakes they made can be imputed to misunderstanding or lack of capability for the source text, that is, inadequate adaptation to eco-environment of the source text. By contrast, Zhao achieves the most degree of adaptation to translational eco-environment of the source text and selection for the target text, based on understanding of readers.

4.3 The Level of Syntactical Structure

Syntax concerns the ways in which words combine to form sentences and the rules which govern the information of sentences [19]. As Morris points out in his logical-philosophical approach to semiotics, syntactics is of being the study of the "formal relation of signs to one another", that is, the study of sentence structures [20]. In some sense, the syntactical structure level determines the way in which the translator adopt artistic form of the literary work. As well-known translation theorist Peter Newmark puts it, syntax, word order, and sound patterns all have their meaning. In other words, the form itself in literary language can convey the meaning of the work. The degree of adaptation of three translators to the source text can be illustrated in the following two examples.

ST	TT of Giles	TT of Wang	TT of Zhao
养不教，	To feed without teaching	A child untaught	What's a father?
父之过。	Is the father's fault.	Is father's fault,	A good teacher.
教不严，	To teach without severity	Where teaching's slack,	What's a teacher?
师之惰。	is the teacher's laziness.	The teacher's done naught.	A strict preacher.

Table **6**: Example 1 of Syntactical Structure Level

ST	TT of Giles	TT of Wang	TT of Zhao
香九龄，	Hsiang, at nine years of age,	That Xiang at nine	Hsiang, at nine,
能温席。	**Could warm** (his parents') bed.	**Could warm** his father's bed.	**Warmed** bedding fine.
孝于亲，	Filial piety towards parents	"A dutiful son!"	Follow this one,
所当执。	Is that to which we should hold fast.	So everybody said.	This filial son.

Table **7**: Example 2 of Syntactical Structure Level

In Table 6, as for two declarative sentences in the original work, Giles and Zhao have their own merits. They take different approaches in forms of sentences. Giles uses literal translation, almost word for word, making attempts to preserve symmetrical structure of the original text. In the two sentences, he both does with infinitive clauses as themes, "be + predicate" structures as rhemes. Giles highlights importance of father and teacher in education by parallel structure "to…without…is…" while Zhao frees from the form of the original and uses two rhetorical questions to preserve spirit of the source text [21]. What is more, Zhao explains image of teacher by "preacher" and takes more consideration for religious belief of target readers, which embodies good selection for the eco-environment of the target text. It is not difficult to see that the shape beauty of the two benefits from the frequent occurrence of the same sentence structure, that is, the use of repeated strength to produce beauty. By contrast, selection of Wang is inferior to Giles and Zhao, just ordinary sentence pattern, which tells in a simple, straightforward way. Therefore, he fails to use changing sentence patterns or punctuation to underline the important role teacher and father play in education so that his translation is likely to grab the reader's attention and difficult to empathize with the target language readers.

In Table 7, three translators translate "能温席" by different tenses. Both Giles and Wang employ "could warm". "能温席" in source text describes a form of event representation and this event has already happened. However, "could" in English is meant to be able mentally or spiritually as distinguished from "may", to be able physically, which signifies that somebody is capable of some ability in cognitive and there is no propositional content [22]. So, they do not convey the connotated intention what the author wants to express, which is not exactly adaptive to eco-environment of the source text. Unlike Giles and Wang, Zhao uses simple past tense "warmed" to describe a past event about Hsiang, which is adaptive to emotion of filial piety what the source text is meant for. His translation reflects a strong adaptive ability to the source text and selective capability for the target text. For the second sentence of this section, Giles translates it as a predicate clause "... is that...", which appears to be particularly long and cumbersome; "towards

parents" is added to render the translation wordy, not in line with the original concise style. Wang's translation is much briefer with three words per line, and the cause-and-effect logical relationship between the two sentences before and after the original text is translated. The downside of his translation is that the use of quotation marks in "A dutiful son!" seems inconsistent with the original form. By analogy with the appealing epigram of the original text, Zhao translates it into an imperative sentence, strengthens the expression tone, and realizes the discourse purpose of calling on readers to follow the example of Huang Xiang and be filial children, and reappears the educative function of the original text.

To sum up, Giles' and Wang's translations vary in length per line. As a result, terseness beauty of the original can be difficult to find in their English translations. By contrast, Zhao's translation is characterized by diverse sentence patterns, with short and simple text arranged in three-word verse. Unlike Gilles' heavy use of long sentences and compound sentences, and Wang's translation with straightforward and common sentence patterns, Zhao excels in employing minor sentences and phrases, such as absolute structures, participle constructions, and noun phrases. Diversified structures and same word length with the original text give expression to better adaptation to the source text in the eco-environment, which can be considered as closer imitation to the original work both in form and style.

5. Conclusion

This paper analyzes three English versions of *San Zi Jing*, based on the Approach to Translation as Adaptation and Selection, from three levels of linguistic dimension—phonology, vocabulary and syntactical structure. The main results are as follows. Three translators all make selective adaptations to their environment at their own times. In other words, they are selected by the translational eco-environment to translate *San Zi Jing*. When it comes to transformations of linguistic dimension, phonologically, the adaptation level of Wang's version is second behind Zhao's, and Giles' version ranks last with no regard for rhythm; in terms of lexical use, Zhao's dictions are more accurate than those of Wang and Giles; as for syntactical structures, while Giles and Zhao have varied sentence patterns, Wang is more conventional.

Due to the restrictions of translators' translational eco-environment, different translators made different adaptions and selections, so different translated versions can be presented before readers. It is necessary for translators to give priority to translational eco-environment prior to translating. Undoubtedly, in translation, there exists diversity as well like ecosystem. It is divergence presented in Giles', Wang's and Zhao's translations that embodies the degree of adaptation and selection for three translators. Translators play a central role in the process of translation. They all the time have to make selective adaptations and adaptive selections in various degrees and make their effort to seek balance in the whole translational eco-environment so as to keep harmony and balance of the special environment. In summary, the three translators of *San Zi Jing* all have provided their readers with successful translation in their times by carrying out selective adaptations and adaptive selections, so existence of their translated versions should be reasonable and also necessary.

Throughout the above discussion, it is hoped that, on the one hand, it can help readers understand these three different versions and spread traditional Chinese culture towards overseas well. On the other hand, it can arouse the attention of people for Chinese classics translation in China and give some implications for retranslation of Chinese classical works.

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