

Translators' Agency in the Translation Network of Chinese Literature

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Abstract

Translators' agency is defined in this paper as the willingness and ability to act after active negotiations with various actors (humans and non-humans alike), highlighting the translator's power over other actors involved in each translation activity, namely, his or her intentional acceptance or refusal of the influence from external constraints. What is being investigated, is not what influence the translator's agency exerts, but the extent to which its influence (or 'weight') is exerted upon the final product. We bear these two questions in mind: (1) Does the translator's agency influence all stages of the translation process[1]? (2) If it does not, in which stages does it exert influence and to what extent? Which stages does it not exert influence and what other agencies exert their influences at these stages? Drawing on available studies and archival primary sources and adopting Latour's Actor-Network Theory to make sense of the findings, this article tries to assess the different extents to which a translator could exercise their agency, by determining the interplay between translators and other actors in the translation network of *Chinese Literature*. The findings of this report are that translators can exercise no agency in the selection, editing and revision stages, because they can't participate in these. It is in the translation stage, that translators can participate and have the chance to negotiate with other actors. Translators can often exercise their agency to the largest extent, here, regardless of how powerful other actors might be.

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