

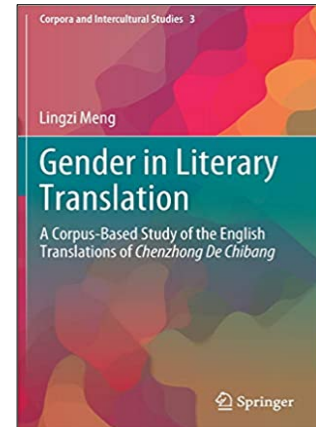
Lingzi Meng, **Gender in Literary Translation: A Corpus-Based Study of the English Translations of *Chenzhong De Chibang***, Singapore: Springer, 2019, 162 pp., \$119.99 (hardcover).

Reviewed by

Weiping Wu and Gaosheng Zhan¹

Wuhan University of Technology, China

Gender is an omnirelevant category in most social practices (Lazar, 2005, p. 3). Over the last few years, the gender–translation dyad has been gaining critical consistency and experiencing remarkable growth, with numerous conferences and many publications devoted to exploring the multifaceted nature of translation theory and practice when approached from a gender perspective (Castro, 2013). The book **Gender in Literary Translation: A Corpus-Based Study of the English Translations of *Chenzhong De Chibang***, by Lingzi Meng, explores gender construction in literary translation from the perspective of poststructuralism, and through a corpus-based case study. It makes significant contributions to the fields of gender study and translation study by offering an alternative perspective of translational discourse to examine issues at the interface of gender and language, and opening up different kinds of questions for the field of gender and translation studies as well as for the exploration of the ideological nature of translation, which adds new dimension to the dynamics of the thriving field and may elicit new understanding of the relationship between gender and language. The intended readership of this book is broad and global, including researchers in the corpus linguistics field, intercultural communication field, and translation field, and even individuals who have an arts and humanities or social sciences background.



This book consists of six chapters, with one abstract and five appendices. The introductory chapter starts out with the development and status quo of gender and language studies and gender and translation studies. The author takes great effort to analyze that the general purpose of feminist writers and feminist translators in the “first wave” and “second wave” women’s movements was to “identify and critique the tangle of concepts which relegates both women and translation to the bottom of the social and literary ladder” (Simon, 1996, p. 1). However, the undisputed contributions made in that era have been challenged by the poststructuralist conceptualizations of gender and language in “third wave” feminism, thus the gender theories and gender and language theories at that time “have passed” and “are no longer sufficient” (Cameron, 1995, p. 39). Meng’s research, from the perspective of poststructuralism and with the assistance of corpus, provides an in-depth exploration in terms of different questions in gender and translation in the new era.

It is hardly a coincidence that the period that saw the development of feminist and then gender studies also witnessed a remarkable growth in translation studies (Simon, 1996, p. ix). In chapter 2, Meng reviews the work on gender and translation studies, with a focus on study paradigms. Three paradigms

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prevail in the work at the interface of translation studies and gender studies. The first one holds the conventional assumption that biologically different women and men possess distinctive femininity and masculinity that are socially constructed. The second one develops from the influence of third-wave feminism and takes gender as a discursive process rather than biologically determined and fixed. As an emerging paradigm, the third one combines feminist translation studies and feminist linguistics, where researchers attempt to perceive translational gender issues from an angle informed by the theories and practices from the discipline of gender and language studies. Then studies on the novel *Chenzhong De Chibang*, as well as its translations, are reviewed.

Chapter 3 discusses the theoretical issues underpinning the research and then introduces the analytic framework. This chapter begins with the theorization of language and subjectivity and theorization of gender from a poststructuralist perspective, which serves as theoretical framework for the study. Then, critical discourse analysis (CDA) is introduced as analytic framework. "With its critiques of the workings of power and dominance, CDA might appear initially to be the most 'obvious' approach to feminist gender and language study" (Sunderland, 2006, p. 59). It has been closely related to the feminist approach in women's studies and been repeatedly proved to be useful in demystifying the interrelationships of gender, power, and ideology in discourse. In terms of the nature of discourse, power, and their dialectical relation, CDA offers various tools and strategies to operate these concepts, which provides linguistically material explanations for the relationship among them.

Methodology and data collection and analysis for the study are introduced in chapter 4. This study adopts a combined approach of both microscopic and macroscopic analysis, with computer-based text corpus providing a standardized data base for the investigation of important linguistic features and CDA serving as an approach to discourse analysis. In this chapter, the author emphasizes the justification for the selection of the texts and the validity of the linguistic features that constitute the actual clues for representing the gender construction of the translators through language use. On the one hand, the accurate selection of texts ensures the reliability of the data, thereby enhancing the credibility of the research; on the other hand, it provides other researchers in this field with a relatively standard method in terms of text selections.

In chapter 5, the author presents a detailed text analysis, including the language use of both translators, the gender representation in their translations, and the possible factors that influence the linguistic performance of the translators. By using a computer-based text corpus, modality, transitivity, other pragmatic features, and the translator's mediation and translation strategies are discussed, which offers an insightful model for researchers to conduct their own studies using corpus-based analysis.

Chapter 6, the final chapter, summarizes the major findings of the study, discusses its implications and limitations, and offers suggestions for future studies. Specifically, this research answers questions in terms of how women and men translators construct their gender identities through language in translation, how they represent gender constructed in the source text in translation, how the identity of the translator interacts with gender identity, and how the gender construction and representation in the translations by opposite-sex translators is comprehended in a poststructuralist discursive sense. As demonstrated by the study, women translators are likely to deconstruct and subvert conventional image of femininity with

aggressive translation strategies, while the men translators take a largely traditional male perspective toward women and hold them in bias.

This book is of great value to students and researchers in the field of gender and language studies as well as translation studies. First, it offers an alternative angle to examine gender from mainstream White Western feminist linguistics and culture, extends the understanding of the diversity of women's identity, and stresses the contextual effects on the construction of gender in a specific culture other than the West. Second, the study is a shift away from previous feminist translation study paradigms, pointing toward new areas of research at the interface of gender, ideology, language, and translation, and explores answers to different kinds of questions for the field of gender and translation studies as well as for the exploration of the ideological nature of translation. Third, it also offers some suggestions that point out future directions for gender and translation researchers, such as four dimensions of comparative studies and the variability of women and men translators' faithfulness in terms of the transfer of ideational, textual, and interpersonal information in translation.

In all, from the perspective of poststructuralism and with the help of corpus as well as CDA, this book investigates the possible ways for translators to construct their gender identities through translation and to interpret the power and control that constrains the construction. It provides researchers with a new perspective in gender and language study, and may elicit new understanding of the relationship between gender and language. Therefore, it is a highly recommended book for researchers and students in the areas of language, gender, and translation studies.

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