TRANSLATING BEHAVIOUR IN THE LATE QING PERIOD OF CHINA:
A CASE STUDY OF LIN SHU AND HIS TRANSLATION OF
ROBINSON CRUSOE

by

CHAN IUT VA

A dissertation submitted to the
School of Humanities
of the University of Birmingham
in part fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

Master of Arts
in
TRANSLATION STUDIES

This dissertation consists of approximately 12940 words

Supervisor: Dr Carmen Millán-Varela

Centre for English Language Studies
Department of English
University of Birmingham
Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2TT
United Kingdom

September 2002
Influenced by the theoretical ideas introduced by the concept of the Cultural Turn, this thesis aims to describe the translating behaviour in the late Qing period of China, finding out the role, the position and the practice of translation activities. In order to give a more substantial representation of my research results, there will be a case study on Lin Shu, who was one of the translators in the late Qing period. I will also conduct an analysis of his rendition of *Robinson Crusoe*.

Past studies often criticize that late Qing translations were unfaithful to the originals. Translators at that time were always blamed for making arbitrary changes to the target texts. However, from the evidence found, I will argue that the act of translating in the late Qing period was triggered by the political need to save China. Constrained by some socio-cultural forces in the overall environment and by individual values on Chinese literature, translators then tended to produce rewritings, while resorting to the translation strategies of domestication and foreignization.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract .......................................................................................................................... i

Acknowledgements ........................................................................................................ii

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION ..................................................................................1

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK IN THE CULTURAL TURN ..........7

2.1 Even-Zohar’s Systemic Approach to Translation .................................................8

   2.1.1 Polysystem Theory ......................................................................................... 9

   2.1.2 Position of Literary Translation in the Polysystem ............................... 14

2.2 Gideon Toury’s Target-Oriented Approach to Translation and Concept of
   Norms .................................................................................................................... 17

2.3 André Lefevere’s Concepts of Rewriting and of Manipulation ................. 20

2.4 Lawrence Venuti’s Concept of (In)visibility .................................................... 22

CHAPTER 3: TRANSLATING BEHAVIOR IN LATE QING PERIOD .......25

3.1 Cultural and Socio-Political Characteristics of late Qing Period ............ 25

3.2 Translation Activities ........................................................................................... 30

   3.2.1 Translation Products .................................................................................. 30

   3.2.2 Translators and Agents .............................................................................35

3.3 Translation Approaches in late Qing Period ................................................... 37

CHAPTER 4: LIN SHU AND HIS TRANSLATIONS .................................. 44

4.1 Lin Shu as a Translator ...................................................................................... 45

4.2. Lin Shu’s Translated Works .........................................................................47

4.3 Lin Shu’s Political Belief and Translation Ideology ................................... 48

4.4 Lin Shu’s Approaches to Translation .............................................................. 52
CHAPTER 5: LIN SHU’S TRANSLATED VERSION OF ROBINSON CRUSOE ..57

5.1 Robinson Crusoe by Defoe ...............................................................57

5.1.1 Philosophic Theme .................................................................58

5.1.2 Economic Theme .................................................................60

5.2 Robinson Crusoe by Lin Shu .......................................................61

5.3 Translation Strategies Employed by Lin Shu in Lubinsun Piaoliu Ji ..........63

5.3.1 Domestication .....................................................................65

5.3.2 Foreignization .....................................................................70

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION .................................................................78

Appendices ..................................................................................80

References ..................................................................................82