

College of Foreign Languages and Literatures, FJCU

Transition and Transformation: Explorations in Language, Literature, Culture, and Translation

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轉銜·轉變：外語、文學、文化與翻譯之探究

Paper Abstract (English)

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| Title : Translating a Culturally-loaded Term: On George Taylor's "Palangkan" | | | |
| Fields of specialization : translation studies; comparative literature; literature of Taiwan Indigenous peoples; world literature | | | |
| Abstract | | | |
| <p>In 1888, <i>The China Review</i> published "A Ramble through Southern Formosa," an article written by George Taylor, who had spent years at South Cape Lighthouse as its keeper. In his various ethnographic works, Taylor recorded the geographical, socio-political, and ethnological aspects of Southern Formosa, as can be seen in the article mentioned above, which portrays Taylor's trip from South Cape to Pilam in May 1887. In the two Chinese translations of this article, by Liu Ka-shiang and Shih-chung Hsieh respectively, the term "Palangkan" (a social institution of the Puyuma Indigenous people of Taiwan) has been translated differently: Liu chose to render it as <i>Gongxie</i> (公廨) or <i>Nanzi jihuisuo</i> (男子集會所); and in Hsieh's version, it was translated similarly as <i>Nanzi huisuo</i> (男子會所), but with a transliteration of the term in Chinese (巴拉冠). This paper aims at commenting the two translations critically from the perspective of "ethnography as translation" (or vice versa, "translation as ethnography"), and will go on to elaborate how "Palangkan," a heavily culturally-loaded term of the Puyuma people, would be rendered through the later decades in the works by Torii Ryuzo, William Pickering, Ishii Shinji, Alice Kirjassoff, and Janet Montgomery McGovern, and how some of their translations have been translated into Chinese. In the concluding remarks, it will be evinced that this case of ethnographic translation can be seen as a proof for the close relation between translation and research. When dealing with culturally-loaded terms, translators are obliged to see themselves as more than translators.</p> | | | |