



Lin Yutang's Translation Thought: A Dialogic Perspective Based on Bakhtin's Theory

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Abstract This paper briefly introduces Bakhtin's dialogism and the two basic concepts of the self and others. A detailed descriptive analysis of Lin Yutang's translation reveals that Lin Yutang displays his dialogic consciousness in his awareness of others, which can be drawn from his statement about the translator's responsibilities, namely, the responsibility for the author, the reader, the sponsor, and even the arts. The authors point out that Lin's consciousness of dialogue is the key factor for his successful dissemination of Chinese cultures to the West. Then, by tracing back the original roots of Lin's consciousness of dialogue, the paper digs into his views on Chinese and Western cultures. It is expected to illustrate the applicability of Bakhtin's dialogism in translation theory and unveil the dialogic nature of Lin's translation thought as well, hoping to provide some guidance for the contemporary dissemination of Chinese literature and classics.

Keywords: Bakhtin, Dialogism, Self and others, Lin Yutang, Translation thought

1. Introduction

Dialogism is espoused by Mikhail Bakhtin, the renowned Russian literary theorist and philosopher, in his study of Dostoevsky's novels in the 20th century. Dialogue is a key concept in Bakhtin's theoretical framework. In the narrow sense, it refers to the dialogues cited by quotation marks or the talks between two or more people. In the broad sense, it can be the dialogues between consciousness, ideas, and even "life by its very nature is dialogic. To live means to participate in dialogue: to ask questions, to heed, to respond, to agree, and so forth" (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 293). Linell (1998) also pointed out that dialogues take place not only in interpersonal dialogue (situated interaction) but also at the level of socio-cultural practices, communities, institutions, etc. Obviously, dialogism transcends the oral or written exchanges and extends to the very existence of human beings, as Bakhtin (1984) set forth in his book *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*: "All else is the means; dialogue is the end. A single voice ends nothing and resolves nothing. Two voices are the minimum for life, the minimum for existence" (p. 252). Consequently, dialogism is highly applicable to various studies, including philosophy, literature, linguistics, cultures, and so on.

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Translation, involving more dialogic relations among different participants and dealing with languages between different cultures, is definitely consistent with the dialogic nature. It is thus undoubtedly that there arises a wave of research on applying dialogism to translation studies. Robinson (1991) is the first one who applied dialogism to his theory in the book *Translator's Turn* and advocated a dialogic model to understand the relations involved in translation by indicating "his or her words entangled with the words of others" (p. 104). Oittinen (1989) emphasized the dialogue of translation by employing dialogism to discuss the translation of children's literature, implying that dialogism exists in the context, within the translator himself, and between the translator and readers. Kumar (2014) believed that dialogism can be an out to the dilemma where translators find themselves stuck with faithfulness or freedom for centuries. In addition, Mehta (2018) held that Bakhtin's thoughts helped to grasp the nature of translation and enriched translation theories. In China, some scholars also highly valued dialogism and combined it with translation studies. Peng and Jiang (2005) analyzed the relationship between context and dialogism and then moved forward to demonstrate the function of synchronic dialogue and diachronic dialogue in translation. Chen (2009) viewed translation as polyphonic dialogues participated by the author, the translator, and the reader and mediated by a given text. Yin and Liu (2016) investigated the cultural translation in interlingual writing with reference to dialogism. With the inspiration of previous studies, the paper tends to explore Lin Yutang's idea on the translation by employing Bakhtin's dialogism to reveal the inner philosophical essence of his translation thought.

Lin Yutang accumulated rich experience in literary translation and writing and developed his insights into translation. Chinese scholar Chen (2000) once commented that among Chinese non-left-wing writers in the 1930s, Lin Yutang made the greatest contributions to translation theory. In view of this, the study intends to make a descriptive study of Lin Yutang's translation thought from the perspective of Bakhtin's dialogism. How is dialogism connected to translation study? What are the dialogic aspects of Lin Yutang's translation thought? And what are the contributing factors to Lin Yutang's dialogic consciousness? The paper intends to answer these questions, enrich the study of translation theory in China, and shed some inspiration on translator studies in other countries.

2. On the Self, Others and Translation

Bakhtin's dialogism is established on the basis of his differentiation of the self and others, which are two important concepts in dialogism and run through his book *The Problem of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. On the one hand, Bakhtin holds that neither the self nor others succeed in dominating each other, nor do they stand superior to each other. Instead, they are in an equal state and with equal status. Equality is the basic foundation for dialogue, and "dialogue is a special form of mutual relationship between equal consciousness" (Bakhtin, 1982, p. 339). On the other hand, Bakhtin believes that each individual's mode of self-participation is unique and irreplaceable. In this way, the self exists in a position of singular uniqueness that cannot be replaced by others. The world is composed of the interaction between the self and others, and existence is the shared participation of both the self and others.

To be more specific, there exists some prerequisites for the self and others into dialogue. Firstly, dialogue is indispensable to an equal state between the self and others. In Bakhtin's study of Dostoevsky's works, the principle of equality in dialogue is highly emphasized, where the self and others correspond to the author and the heroes. Bakhtin believes that Dostoevsky's works show a variety of voices and opinions, and there is no absolute, no superior, or inferior, but only equality between various voices and ideas. They can communicate and understand each other fully, realizing textual meaning and aesthetic transcendence through dialogue. Consequently, Bakhtin (1984) opposes the monologic voice of singularity and holds that a monologic text is "rather an objectified (plotted) clash of two represented positions, subordinated wholly to the higher, ultimate authority of the author" (p. 188). He advocates mutual dialogue and communication among different subjects. Secondly, Bakhtin emphasizes the differences between the self and others. Bakhtin views existence as a coexistence of the self and others. However, others are not mere objective but independent and subjective entities. They refer to:

All subjects or subjectivities that are different from 'I' and exist externally to 'I', including specific individuals such as you and him, as well as the material or conceptual existence imbued

with meaning in the environment. It even includes that part of myself or self-consciousness that I am trying to escape from. (Wang, 2001, p. 44)

At the same time, Bakhtin's recognition of the uniqueness of the positions of the self and others gave rise to the concepts of "surplus of seeing" and "outsideness". These concepts affirm the subjective status of the other, which we have mentioned above. It is precisely because the self and the other occupy different "surplus of seeing" and "outsideness" that the differences between the self and others arise. Hence, the self must engage in dialogue and communication with others so as to fully understand the world and understand oneself.

Translation is not the simple transformation from one language to another or from one code to another. Instead, it is a complex process involving the interaction between translation subjects, languages, cultures, societies, and so on. In this sense, translation is especially by nature dialogic and interactive. From the macroscopic perspective, it is understandable to view translation as a great cultural dialogue between the self (the source culture) and others (target cultures). With dialogism's emphasis on the consciousness of others and on the coexistence of equally signifying consciousness, translation can be a true intercultural dialogue only if the voice of one culture equally coexists with the other voice coming from another culture and keeps its unique characteristics. From the microscopic perspective, it is also a dialogue between the subjects in communication. If the translator were viewed as the self, the author, the reader, and even the sponsor would be the others. Translation is the negotiation between the translation subjects without the domination of a single subject. The emphasis on the consciousness of others gets the studies on translation subjectivity out of the traditional mode of single subjectivity, which was either author-oriented, reader-oriented, or translator-oriented, and induces the interactive relationship between the subjects. In a word, dialogism and the main concepts of the self and others pave the way for reconsidering some controversies in translation. What's more, it provides another perspective to view Lin Yutang's translation thought.

3. On Lin Yutang's Consciousness of Dialogue

Lin Yutang is an internationally renowned writer, translator, and scholar in the 20th century, devoting his life to disseminating Chinese culture to the world and bridging the gap between Chinese and Western cultures. With the abundant experience accumulated in cultural exchange between China and the West, Lin Yutang (1984) gained insights on translation, which are directly stated in his essay *On Translation* and scattered in his discourse on translation in the prefaces of written or translated books. From a careful examination of his translation thought, the authors find that Lin's dialogic consciousness lies in his respect for others, his realization of interaction between consciousness, which has the same value, and his understanding of differences between languages and cultures. In other words, Lin's dialogic consciousness can be glimpsed from his strong responsibilities for the author, the reader, the sponsor, and the arts.

3.1. Responsibility for the Author

In his essay *On Translation*, Lin Yutang (1984) proposed three standards for translation, namely, Fidelity, Fluency, and Beauty. Furthermore, he derived one of the important responsibilities of the translator from the standards of fidelity by stating that "the translator should be responsible to the original author" (Lin, 1984, p. 418). He approved of Yan Fu's idea of being faithful to the original text in translation, who was a well-known translator in the Qing dynasty. What's more, he shifted his focus on the author's consciousness, which is not objectified or reduced to mere objects of the translator's consciousness. Instead, they are the consciousness of others with whom the translator can interact. In the process of translation, the translator's initial encounter is with the original text itself rather than the author. Although the author is not present, Lin Yutang did not neglect the existence of the author, the underlying consciousness behind the text. His discourses on the discussion of the translator and the author can also serve as supporting evidence for this argument.

Since the preface seems to be the most influential site in which translators can engage in a direct dialogue with the critical establishment (Ali, 2018), let's start with the preface of *The Importance of Living*. He wrote that "there is, therefore, the matter of my obligations to these authors, especially my

Chinese friends in spirit” (Lin, 1998, p. ix). “In the preparation of this book, a few of my friends have been especially helpful with their contributions and advice ...” (Lin, 1998, p. ix), and “The older my friendship with them, the more likely is my indebtedness to their ideas to be of the familiar, elusive and invisible type, like parental influence in a good family breeding” (Lin, 1998, p. x). It can be seen that Lin Yutang is not only reading the source text but also talking with the author, the old friends who share an equal consciousness with him. His understanding and interpretation of the original work is more like making a dialogue or negotiation with the implicit author. As the dialogue deepens, the potential of the text, the author’s intentions, and the inherent meaning of the author are fully revealed. The voice of the author and the voice of the translator blend together in an ongoing dialogue, and the meaning of the original work is achieved through the translator’s continuous understanding and interpretation of the original text, leading to a resonance of thoughts and emotions.

In order to better listen to and understand the words of the original authors and ensure smooth communication with them, Lin Yutang usually chose to translate those works whose authors resonate with his own emotions. Shen Fu, Tu Long, Zhang Chao, and Su Dongpo are all his favorite friends with whom he can achieve a spiritual connection. In doing so, Lin Yutang shares a greater “apperceptive background” with the original authors and their works, facilitating deep conversations with the authors and other relevant individuals about the original texts, deeply understanding the intended meanings, and optimizing the translations. “Apperceptive background” is a concept proposed by Bakhtin, which includes the listener’s (reader’s) expected vision, level of knowledge, and the ability to sense and understand specific contexts (Hu, 2010). That is, the translator should be able to understand implicit information in the text shared by all members of the linguocultural community based on their cultural values (Akmaral et al., 2021). Therefore, the process of translation is not a passive acceptance of the original work and the author by the translator but rather a creative and equal dialogue between the translator and the author and the text on the basis of respecting others.

3.2. Responsibility for the Reader

Lin Yutang also highly values the reader’s consciousness. In his essay *On Translation*, he derived another important responsibility of the translator from the standards of fluency by saying, “The translator should be responsible to the Chinese readers” (Lin, 1984, p. 426). Then, he explained that “translators must completely adhere to the Chinese mentality” (Lin, 1984, p. 426) when translating from English to Chinese and vice versa. Since each language has its own grammar, syntax, and certain conventions, disregarding the writing habits of the target language and the reading habits of the readers would inevitably result in awkward and ineffective texts. Besides, he emphasized that:

The purpose of language is not only to convey meaning but also to facilitate emotional communication. It is not solely about achieving a clear and unambiguous understanding of the intended message but also about evoking emotions and engaging the reader. (Lin, 1984, p. 426)

In his book *Self-Narrative at Eighty*, he also stated that the secret of his creation of a style is “to treat the reader as a confidant, speaking sincerely to them as if having an unrestricted conversation with an old friend” (Lin, 1979, p. 113). All of the above-mentioned show Lin Yutang’s emphasis on the responsibility toward readers, who are also the equal consciousness with whom he needs to interact.

In order to ensure that the dialogue can elicit responsive reactions from others, Lin Yutang would select to translate the works that can evoke emotional resonance in readers by using writing styles that they enjoy and are familiar with. In the 1930s, American industrial civilization experienced rapid development and economic growth. However, while this highly industrialized life brought abundant material wealth to the people, it also brought about spiritual emptiness and boredom. On the one hand, they longed for a life of freedom, beauty, and happiness, but on the other hand, they couldn’t escape the realities of the present world. Lin Yutang captured this psychological dilemma of the American people and vigorously promoted the philosophy of Chinese happiness, inner aesthetics, and a detached attitude towards life in his books, such as *The Importance of Living*, *The Gay Genius: The Life and Times of Su Tungpo*, *The Wisdom of Lao Tzu* and so on. These works catered to the psychological needs of Western readers at the time, making his works highly favored by Western readers. And let’s

also take a look at his translation of Famous Chinese Short Stories; the story he chose “have a most nearly universal appeal” and “answer more to the purpose of a modern short story”, so:

The reader shall come away with the satisfactory feeling that a particular insight into human character has been gained, or that his knowledge of life has been deepened, or that pity, love, or sympathy for a human being has been awakened. (Lin, 1955, p. xi)

Although this approach may lead to a loss of accuracy in translation, it is a wise move to engage in better dialogue and communication with readers.

As Bakhtin believes that the meaning of a text is dynamic, and the generation of meaning is a process of dialogue, Lin Yutang also believes dialogue points to the future, and the meaning of a text cannot directly reach its endpoint based solely on the subjective ideas of the original work and the author. Therefore, translators should take the target readers of the translated work into consideration because they play an important role in the continuation of the original text's life and the existence of the translated work. As the translator translates the original text, the consciousness of the implicit author accompanies them throughout the process. Similarly, after completing the dialogue with the original work and the author, the translator's focus shifts to the target readers of the translated work in the process of its creation, and the readers become an integral part of the translator's work. It can be concluded that Lin Yutang attaches particular importance to the interaction with the authors and readers, delving into the essence of Chinese traditional culture through dialogue with them and facilitating its integration with Western culture.

3.3. Responsibility for the Sponsors

In addition to the responsibility for the original authors and readers, Lin Yutang's awareness of others is also reflected in his respect for the opinions of sponsors—Pearl S. Buck and The Commercial Press. Lefevere (1992) pointed out that sponsors refer to those forces (including individuals and institutions) that can promote or hinder the reading, writing, or rewriting of literature, which can be exerted by persons and also by a group of persons, a religious body, a political party, a social class, a royal court, publisher, and last but not least, the media, both newspaper and magazines, and larger television corporations. Obviously, the creation and dissemination of literary translations depend not only on the communication between translators, original authors, and readers but also on various factors within the sponsor system. Just as the success of Lin Shu's translations relied on the packaging and promotion by Commercial Press in the Late Qing dynasty in China, and the successful dissemination of contemporary Mo Yan's novels to the West relied on the operation of large foreign publishing institutions, Lin Yutang recognized that it was publishers who truly brought translated works into the view of target language scholars and readers.

Taking *My Country and My People*, Lin Yutang's (1935) pioneering work that opened the American market for him, as an example, the structure of the book, the writing style, and even the title were the results of multiple dialogues and exchanges between Lin Yutang and Richard Walsh. Lin Yutang initially came up with titles like *China: A Confession* and *My Compatriots* and later thought of other book titles, but Richard Walsh eventually suggested *My Country and My People*, believing that it was both solemn and suitable for the American market's needs. In addition, every time Lin Yutang completed a portion of the manuscript, he would have Pearl S. Buck and her husband review and proofread it, asking for their straightforward criticism and professional editing. The Buck couple indeed provided candid opinions. After reading the chapter *The Ideal Life*, they suggested deleting the first four pages to make the structure of the entire chapter more compact and the writing smoother. Lin Yutang accepted most of their revision suggestions. As for the publication and marketing strategy of the book, Lin Yutang also engaged in dialogue and communication with the sponsors and The Commercial Press. He requested a simple cover for the work, believing that the simpler it was, the more it would attract readers, and The Commercial Press accepted his suggestions. Lin Yutang also generally approved of the marketing strategies and methods employed by The Commercial Press to promote the book (Qian, 2017).

The writing process of *The Importance of Living* followed a similar pattern. Originally, Lin Yutang intended to translate some Chinese medium-length classics to represent the Chinese art of living and cultural spirit. However, he finally accepted the bookstore owner's advice that the book *The Importance of Living* should come first, and the translation of classics should come later after negotiation. During the writing process, Pearl S. Buck and her husband Richard Walsh also provided modifications, suggesting that it should be made clear to readers in the first few chapters that the book was about everyday family life experiences, and readers should constantly be aware that they were reading a collection of Chinese philosophical wisdom spanning over four thousand years. In terms of writing, they also deleted and reorganized sentences and paragraphs. In a nutshell, Lin Yutang attached special importance to the interaction with the original author, readers, and even sponsors and accomplished the deconstruction of the meaning of the original text and the construction of the meaning of the translated text in the interactive dialogues between the self and others, realizing the cultural pursuit of telling Chinese people about foreign cultures and telling foreigners about Chinese cultures, and promoting the interactive exchanges between Chinese and Western cultures.

3.4. Responsibility for the Arts

In the early 1920s in China, there was a debate between Zheng Zhenduo, Mao Dun, and the Shen brothers regarding whether literary works were translatable. In response to this issue, Lin Yutang claimed that "genuine works of art cannot be translated" (Lin, 1984, p. 430). He then used the example of translating poetry to discuss the issue of the untranslatability of artistic language, pointing out that:

Regardless of ancient or modern, Chinese or foreign, the best poems (especially lyrical poetry) are untranslatable. This is because they are entrusted with the essence of language and because the thoughts of the author and the words of the author are completely naturally fused in the best works. Therefore, once they depart from their inherent language, they lose their spiritual body, and this essence of language cannot survive independently. (Lin, 1984, p. 430)

Besides, "Each writer has their own style and charm, and this style and charm are what make their works precious" (Lin, 1984, p. 430). It is not difficult to see that Lin Yutang fully recognized the differences in language, words, and the spirits they carry between different cultures and the differences in the style and characteristics of writers. Therefore, the charm of the original literary work, the subtleties of wording, and the overall style cannot be easily transplanted in the translation.

Despite these, Lin Yutang does not passively accept that literary works are untranslatable. Instead, he seeks the most feasible methods of translation to overcome the linguistic barriers between different ethnicities and countries and achieve mutual communication between different cultures to the greatest extent possible. He explains that the beauty of artistic translation lies in the balance between. He said that "the most important aspect of translating literary art is to emphasize both the style of the original text and its content. Not only should we pay attention to what is being said, but also to how it is being said" (Lin, 1984, p. 431).

It is precisely because of a clear understanding of the differences between different languages that Lin Yutang agrees with Croce's viewpoint, believing that translation is a form of creation. His integrated approach to translation and creation serves as the best evidence for cross-cultural writing. Dialogue holds communicative value, and its direct function is to activate the space for creative thinking and discover the potential inherent in individuals, humanity, and human culture. As a form of cultural dialogue, translation itself is a process of creating new potential. In this sense, both the untranslatability of literary works and the idea that translation is creation are manifestations of Lin Yutang's consciousness of others.

Translations can also be understood as words directed toward an answer, a new text, and a new reader, and they cannot escape the profound influence of the answering word that they anticipate. Translations cannot escape from being different from their originals, from combining what is old and what is new. Translating is a "mirror which not only reflects but generates light" (Steiner, 1976), as George Steiner says in his admirable work *After Babel*.

4. The Roots of Lin Yutang's Consciousness of Dialogue

Lin Yutang once wrote a couplet for himself, which reads One mind seeks the learning of ancients and moderns; two legs straddle the cultures of East and West. In his autobiography, he also approved of the other's comment that his greatest strength lies in explaining Chinese culture to foreigners and foreign culture to Chinese people. In fact, these comments not only summarize Lin Yutang's lifelong cultural pursuit but also represent his perspective and approach to others, seeking to interpret the integration of Chinese and Western cultures and thoughts. Lin Yutang's ability to navigate between Chinese and Western cultures can be attributed to the mutual influence of both cultures, as well as his pursuit of a poetic ideal of constructing a better world with multiple cultures.

4.1. Mutual Influence of both Chinese and Western Cultures

Lin Yutang was born into a Christian family and attended church schools from a young age. As he grew up, he entered St. John's University, a prestigious Christian institution in the United States. He excelled in various activities at the school, serving as the English editor of the campus newspaper, the editor of the yearbook, and the leader of the English debate team. Under the long-term influence of Western education, Lin Yutang developed a solid foundation in the English language and gained a deeper understanding of Western culture and knowledge. During his teaching in Beijing, he keenly felt his inadequate knowledge of Chinese culture and began to immerse himself in studying traditional Chinese literature and history. He dedicated himself to the study of Confucianism, Taoism, and various Chinese works, starting from Tang poetry and *Dream of the Red Chamber* to *Recorded Conversations of the World* and so on. He even frequented the Liu Lichang area, immersing himself in the atmosphere of ancient books and cultural figures. During his studies at Harvard, he focused on comparative literature, specifically European and American literature. When in Leipzig, he studied Chinese language and literature under the guidance of the renowned sinologist August Conrady and wrote his doctoral thesis on the phonology of Classical Chinese, which required a profound foundation in Chinese studies. After returning to China, he taught at Peking University, National Women's Normal University, and Xiamen University. He wrote articles and founded various publications such as *Lun Yu* and *The Mortal World*.

Proficiency in both Chinese and Western languages and cultures makes Lin Yutang a good communicator between the East and the West, as the interlocutors sharing relevant factors of that culture is conducive to meaningful communication (Mona & Purya, 2022; Tabatabaee-Yazdi & Baghaei). Freely navigating between the perspectives of the self and others, Lin Yutang successfully facilitated cultural exchanges between China and the West. Drawing on his Chinese education, he could critically examine Western culture and civilization, and with his Western education, he could objectively evaluate and understand traditional Chinese culture. The perspective of others helped him gain a "surplus of seeing", allowing him to see what the self could not see and thus making "the self" more complete. This can be supported by his recognition and appreciation of Chinese traditional culture. The influence of Western culture gave Lin Yutang more "surplus of vision", enabling him to view Chinese traditional culture with greater tolerance and objectivity and gain a deeper understanding of Chinese culture, which remains relevant over time. During the New Culture Movement, when many intellectuals sought to negate the practical value and significance of traditional culture, Lin Yutang used his Western education as a reference and examined Chinese traditional culture through the lens of Western cultural values, exploring his own cultural roots as a Chinese person. He rediscovered the resources of Chinese traditional culture, particularly identifying with Chinese spiritual culture.

4.2. Lin Yutang's Pursuit of Multiple Cultures

Throughout Lin Yutang's life, he "maintained harmony with nature", "pursued harmony between people", and "cultivated harmony of body and mind" (Wang, 2005, p. 187). Harmony is the driving force behind Lin Yutang's pursuit of integration and coexistence between Chinese and Western cultures. The truth that Lin Yutang adhered to was to discover the essence of Chinese traditional literature and culture, to soothe the minds of humanity, whether they were empty, weary, anxious, or tense, and to satisfy humanity's inner yearning for peace, happiness, serenity, and leisure. This is a universal concern for all of humanity.

Lin Yutang's pursuit of multiculturalism is perfectly exemplified in his novel writing. The novel *Chinatown* expresses his hope for cultural exchange and complementarity between China and the West. In the novel, he portrays the image of a new generation of Chinese people who embrace Chinese culture while integrating Western culture. The protagonists, Tom and Eva, received American education and changed their Chinese way of life. However, they were not blindly infatuated with Western culture but actively embraced the American lifestyle and thinking after rational deliberation. This rational standard is manifested in the fusion of Christian universal love and human nature, combined with traditional Confucian family ethics. In his later years, Lin Yutang evaluated himself as "a bundle of contradictions" in his autobiography *The Importance of Living*. The so-called "bundle of contradictions" is perhaps his self-reflection as he oscillated between the self and others. Since his exposure to Chinese and Western cultures, he has viewed traditional Chinese culture from the perspective of the Westerners and Western culture from the perspective of the Chinese, thus gaining the "outsideness" of others.

As a result, he embarked on a spiritual journey of rethinking and repositioning Chinese culture with the help of Western culture. Similarly, he brought leisurely philosophy into Chinese culture to critique the alienation caused by America's highly industrialized machinery, leading to a fresh understanding of Western civilization. This strengthened the interdependence between the two cultures and contributed to the ultimate achievement of a multicultural pursuit of complementarity and coexistence between China and the West. This aligns with Bakhtin's advocated mode of human existence. Bakhtin's dialogic theory advocates the pursuit of an ideal mode of human existence that transcends the conflicts of discourse between different social groups, schools of thought, different beliefs, and different interests in different countries and native contexts. It aims to establish a context of mutual dialogue, coexistence, and multicultural symbiosis, providing a vibrant and diverse cultural landscape in which multiple voices engage in lively dialogue.

5. Concluding Remarks

As analyzed above, the concepts of the self and others in Bakhtin's dialogic theory shed inspiration on translation activities, which involve translators, authors, readers, and even sponsors in the cross-culture dialogic field. They are independent consciousnesses of equal status and equal value with translators. In addition, it provides us with a new perspective for interpreting Lin Yutang's ideas on his cross-cultural writing, from which we can reacquaint ourselves with Lin Yutang's ideas about the interaction between translation subjects, untranslatability and creativity in literary translation, and translation units. It can be concluded that standing at a philosophical height, Lin Yutang possessed a strong consciousness of others, which in turn contributed to his successful cultural communication. The study proves it feasible to apply Bakhtin's theory to the study on translation theory and provides a reference for the translator studies in other countries. After all, an in-depth study of the translator's thoughts on translation helps us understand his choice of translation materials, translation motives, translation strategies, and so on.

It is hoped that in future research, further exploration will be conducted to uncover the systematic and holistic nature of the translator's ideas. Future studies could examine the effect of other Bakhtin concepts, such as the unfinalizability of dialogue, text and context, heteroglossia, and polyphony, on translation. It could also explain how these concepts relate to translation and how they can be used to analyze a translator's translation thought and practice.

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