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A Study of Chinese Parody Translation
—A Sociosemiotic Approach

熊俊 著

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Foreword

Chinese *fangni*(parody) , as a traditional figure of speech, when it is extensively employed in everyday life, has captured more and more attention from scholars. However, its translation study is far from satisfactory for the researches conducted up to date are inadequate in theorizing and exploring its translation. In view of this, this book aims to deal with the issue of English translation of Chinese parody from the perspective of Sociosemiotic Approach—the author adopts Sociosemiotic Approach put forward by Eugene A. Nida as a theoretical foundation, considers language as social semiotic presented by Halliday as a basis and regards the semiotic approach to meaning and function as well as the sociosemiotic criterion of translation, i. e. correspondence in meaning and similarity in function advocated by Professor Chen Hongwei as a core to guide Chinese parody translation, hoping that it may be of some help to the improvement of rendering Chinese parody by providing a system theory for its translation.

The book begins with Sociosemiotic Approach with its development and relevant researches discussed, exploring its advantages over other approaches and then moves on to the Sociosemiotic nature of Chinese parody translation and elucidates its enlightment to translation. On the basis of comparative data analysis of Chinese parody translation examples mainly in two types of texts (literary works and advertisements) , this book probes into the means about how to achieve the closest functional equivalence in rendering Chinese parody under the guidance of Sociosemiotic Approach. Meanwhile, a few tentative translations are proposed for some Chinese parodies.

It is argued that the Sociosemiotic Approach is powerful for its guidance in rendering Chinese parody. In the Sociosemiotic model, translation is approached as a cross-cultural, cross-social, and cross-linguistic communicative activity. In this light, the process of translation is perceived as one of establishing functional equivalence between the source text and target text, in order for the latter to be as faithful as possible to the former in both meaning and function. This Approach can inspire researchers to interpret the meaning and function of the text in a wider perspective of relationships between language, culture, psychology and society. Such an insight can facilitate the understanding of the nature of Chinese parody, which is the basis of producing a good translation. The process of Chinese parody translation thus is considered as the transference of meaning and function from the Chinese semiotic system to the English one. A good translation of Chinese parody is dependent on its achievement of the closest natural equivalence or similarity in expressive function, informative function, vocative function and aesthetic function in English. It is suggested that borrowing, imitating, paraphrasing and adapting are effective means in translating Chinese parody. No matter which method the translator employs, the English translation should be in accordance with the function of the original Chinese parody, which is the foremost.

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前　言

汉语仿拟是一种修辞手段。随着它日益频繁地出现在日常生活中，其研究越来越受到关注。但遗憾的是汉语仿拟的英译研究少有人涉及，缺乏有效的理论指导，翻译实践处于无章可循的状态。鉴于此，本书尝试在社会符号学翻译法的指导下研究汉语仿拟的英译问题：以Nida提出的社会符号学翻译法为切入口，以Halliday所述的语言的社会符号性为根据，以符号学的意义和功能观为核心，研究汉语仿拟的翻译，以期弥补汉语仿拟的英译研究的不足并为其研究提供系统的理论指导。

本书从社会符号学的历史渊源、意义和功能观，采用社会符号学翻译法的优点入手，结合汉语仿拟的特点及其功能探讨汉语仿拟的社会符号性本质及社会符号学翻译法对汉语仿拟英译的启示。采用了例证法、对照比较法，以社会符号学翻译法所提出的“意义相符、功能相似”的翻译标准为指导，对如何实现汉语仿拟英译过程中的表情功能、美感功能、祈使功能及信息功能对等进行了探讨。同时，本书还对某些处理不甚恰当或未能实现功能对等的译例或者尚无现成翻译的汉语仿拟例句，在分析与批评的基础上提供了尝试性译文。

研究结果表明，社会符号学翻译法对于汉语仿拟翻译的实践有着强大的指导作用。以社会语言学和符号学为基础的社会符号学翻译法，强调翻译是一种跨语言、跨文化、跨社会的交际活动，翻译的过程就是在译语中寻求功能对等的过程，在意义和功能上应尽量做到忠实于源语。用社会符号学翻译法来分析和探讨汉语仿拟翻

译，能将翻译与社会文化紧密地结合起来，能对认识翻译中的文化问题提供深刻的启示，能最大限度地再现汉语仿拟翻译中的主要意义和功能。成功地翻译汉语仿拟的过程实质上就是寻求与其表情功能、美感功能、祈使功能及信息功能达到最佳对等的英语表达的过程。套译、仿译、释译以及变译是实现其功能对等的有效的翻译方法。无论采用哪种方法，汉语仿拟的英译都应尽量做到与原文在功能上达到最佳对等。

Contents

Chapter One Introduction …… 1

1.1 Significance of the Present Study …… 1

1.2 Aim of the Present Study …… 4

1.3 Methodology and Data Collection …… 5

1.4 Outline of the Present Study …… 6

Chapter Two Theoretical Background for This Study …… 8

2.1 Introduction …… 8

2.2 Formation and Development of Sociosemiotic Approach …… 9

2.2.1 Semiotics …… 9

2.2.2 Sociosemiotics …… 15

2.2.3 Sociosemiotic Approach to Translation …… 17

2.3 Meanings and Functions from the Perspective of Sociosemiotic Approach to Translation …… 21

2.3.1 Meanings …… 21

2.3.2 Functions …… 23

2.4 Advantages of Sociosemiotic Approach to Translation …… 26

2.5 Summary …… 28

Chapter Three Sociosemiotic Approach and Chinese Parody Translation …… 30

3.1 Chinese Parody …… 30

3.1.1 Introduction …… 30
3.1.2 Definition of Chinese Parody …… 30
3.1.3 Classification of Chinese Parody …… 32
3.1.4 Characteristics of Chinese Parody Formation …… 41
3.1.5 Functions of Chinese Parody …… 43
3.1.6 English Counterpart of Chinese Parody …… 49
3.1.7 Summary …… 52
3.2 Sociosemiotic Nature of Chinese Parody Translation …… 53
3.3 Criterion of Translating Chinese Parody …… 54
3.3.1 Traditional Criteria of Translation …… 54
3.3.2 Criterion of Sociosemiotic Approach to Chinese Parody Translation …… 61
3.4 Summary …… 68

Chapter Four Application of Sociosemiotic Approach to Translating Chinese Parody …… 69
4.1 Introduction …… 69
4.2 Necessity and Possibility of Achieving Equivalence in Translating Chinese Parody …… 72
4.3 Achieving Equivalence in Translating Chinese Parody …… 74
4.3.1 Expressive Function Equivalence …… 76
4.3.2 Aesthetic Function Equivalence …… 82
4.3.3 Vocative Function Equivalence …… 86
4.3.4 Informative Function Equivalence …… 89
4.4 Means Used in Translating Chinese Parody in Light of Sociosemiotic Approach …… 93
4.4.1 Borrowing …… 94
4.4.2 Imitating …… 98
4.4.3 Paraphrasing …… 103

4.4.4 Adapting ········ 107
4.5 Summary ········ 110

Chapter Five Concluding Remarks ········ 112
5.1 Introduction ········ 112
5.2 Major Findings ········ 113
5.3 Limitations and Suggestions ········ 115

Bibliography ········ 118

Acknowledgements ········ 125

Chapter One Introduction

1.1 Significance of the Present Study

Fangni, as a witty, humorous, satirical and sometimes ridiculous figure of speech, is called "仿拟" in Chinese rhetoric. It was very popular in ancient Chinese, especially after the Han Dynasty. Till today, it is often widely used in everyday life, ranging from literary works to non-literary works such as advertisements, news reports and many other types of texts. In relation to figures of speech, there is a consensus that most figures of speech in Chinese have their counterparts in English. The counterpart of *fangni* is "parody" in English. Both *fangni* and parody have attracted many researchers such as linguists, cognitive psychologists, philosophers, educationalists, anthropologists, sociologists, geographers and art historians, etc. So far there have been many books or academic papers dealing with them from multi-perspectives. Most researches show that *fangni* and parody both refer to the novel expressions created by imitating or deviating from the conventional expressions. That is to say, they are concerned with the same language phenomenon in essence. With regard to this, Lv Xu from Qinghua University says that *fangni* in Chinese and parody in English are identical (吕煦, 2004: 247). In favor of their opinions, the author will adopt the term "Chinese parody" to refer to *fangni* in Chinese.

Studies on parody in the West are mainly conducted from a literary

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or aesthetic perspective or a non-linguistic perspective. Margaret (1993) typically considers parody as a mode of criticism while Hutcheon (1985) regards it as a literary art form. Kuiper (1984), Nash (1985) and Norrick(1989) concentrate their researches on the sarcastic and comic effects of parody in literary works.

Comparatively, researches in China mostly approach parody from linguistic view, which are mainly about the definition, classification, functions, comparative study between parody and other rhetorical devices, and features of parody used in different styles. Many scholars have conducted their studies on parody mainly from the four main different perspectives: rhetorical perspective (陈望道, 1979; 李定坤, 1994; 华先发, 1999); psychological perspective (徐炳昌, 1987; 胡剑波、唐忠顺, 2002); cognitive perspective (陈汝东, 2001; 徐国珍, 2005, 2006; 罗胜杰, 2007, 2008); pragmatic perspective (李鑫华, 2001; 杨才元、吴彩亚, 2002; 牛保义, 2009). In addition, the application research of parody has gradually deepened in recent years, such as the study of parody applied in advertising (罗胜杰, 2008), etc. However, only a few scholars have touched the topic of Chinese parody translation (刘晓雪, 2005; 罗胜杰, 2009; 唐艳芳, 2009).

On the basis of the summary of the previous studies, it cannot be denied that most of the researches conducted up to date are descriptive and classificatory, inadequate in exploring parody translation, especially inadequate in exploring the translation of Chinese parody (*fangni*). Chinese parody translation studies lack of effective theoretical guidance, and there are many dead translations or random translations. Of course, the translation of Chinese parody is no easy job, because it not only involves the linguistic problem but also the cultural one. And the latter is sometimes more difficult to cope with. Whereas, the use of

Chinese parody is getting more and more popular in the modern society, a perfect translation of Chinese parody can not only enhance the communication of cultures and enrich the vocabulary of Chinese and English but also bridge between different fields and science, which provide them with mutual enlightenment and understanding. It is no doubt that the study of Chinese parody translation is of great significance and practical value, and it calls for a systematic and effective guiding principle.

Nowadays, translation studies stand on the threshold of a very exciting new phase, which is changing at a great rate. Translation scholars both at home and abroad have come to know that translation studies are characterized by sociological turn, ecological turn, complement of theories and cross-disciplinary studies involving the fields such as structuralist, linguistics, literature, sociology, ecology, education, philosophy and sociolinguistics, etc. They are getting more and more politicalized and instrumentalized. Many kinds of translation theories have emerged, no matter ancient or modern, domestic or foreign. Most researches show that among these theories the Sociosemiotic Approach to translation is the most holistic perspective as a fundamental discipline in encoding and decoding signs, and using it as a vehicle to study translation is not only ideal but practical, because it's relatively all-inclusive in scope (Nida, 1982). Sociosemiotic Approach has been proved as comparatively all-embracing and most scientific in translation practice, since it breaks with the traditional idea of equivalence and open new perspectives to translation studies at home and abroad, thus it has attracted great attention in domestic translation circles and has been warmly accepted by most scholars in China except for a few criticism. And great achievements have been made in its introduction, application and study. It has been applied to interpreting the translation practice in the fields of both literary translation and non-literary translation like idioms translation, trademark translation, advertising translation, etc. Nevertheless, it has scarcely been applied into the researches of rhetoric translation. The Chinese parody translation has not been systematically touched upon by scholars with Sociosemiotic Approach, therefore, it is of both theoretical and practical significance to conduct the tentative study of Chinese parody translation from this perspective.

1.2 Aim of the Present Study

In view of the limitations of previous studies and the importance of Chinese parody translation, this book introduces Sociosemiotic Approach put forward by Nida as a theoretical foundation, considers language as social semiotic presented by Halliday as a basis and regards sociosemiotic criterion of translation, i. e. correspondence in meaning and similarity in function advocated by Professor Chen Hongwei (陈宏薇, 1998), which has exerted a far-reaching influence on translation theory and practice, as a core to guide Chinese parody translation.

The discussion in this book will mainly focus on the following two major questions which await solutions: First, is Chinese parody translatable and how powerful is Sociosemiotic Approach for its guidance in rendering Chinese parody? Second, how to achieve successful Chinese parody translation and what specific means can be employed? In fact, these two questions are linked together because the first one decides the second as what will be indicated in Chapter Four.

In short, this book aims to deal with the issue of English translation of Chinese parody from the perspective of Sociosemiotic Approach, with one objective to testify the applicability and powerful guidance of this Approach to Chinese parody translation and another one to discover specific translation means of Chinese parodies in the light of this

Approach. Through adopting Sociosemiotic Approach to render Chinese parody, the author hopes to provide a new perspective which may be of some help to Chinese parody translation.

1.3 Methodology and Data Collection

This tentative research is a practical study based on established theories. It will endeavor to explore Sociosemiotic Approach and analyze a corpus of authentic materials to answer the above questions and to provide a systematic analysis of how Chinese parody can be translated to ensure that its intended effect is to be conveyed. The methodology adopted in this book is mainly qualitative and contrastive. In the course of the study, the author would like to use good translators' versions as examples to test the interpretative power of Sociosemiotic Approach. Analysis with Sociosemiotic Approach will run through the study to justify the author's viewpoints with examples. A retrospective approach will be used to trace back what is going on in translating. For example, why and how the translator makes adjustments to achieve function equivalence in rendering Chinese parodies under the guidance of Sociosemiotic Approach.

Data for typical examples of Chinese parody are selected mainly from Chinese newspapers, magazines, TV programs, literary works, rhetoric books, dictionaries, Internet, and other academic papers. The Chinese parody translation examples come from versions of good translations. They are taken from the translated texts of famous literary works, translation journals, translation textbooks, translation studies books and so on, but mainly from literary works and advertisements. The materials collected are in several ways, including observation, note-taking and duplication. This corpus is trying to provide a wealth of authentic data for analysis. The selection of many examples from versions of famous literary works is based on the following considerations: First, the selection conforms to the general practice in researches into translation theorists and practitioners. The use of good versions as example analysis to illustrate their points is a common practice in translation circles. Second, the use of good translator's versions as empirical data to make an analysis may give some reference clues for probing into the means about how to achieve the closest function equivalence in rendering Chinese parody. Third, famous literary works are magnificent treasures of human civilization, and thus their good versions have a big readership. Millions of readers both at home and abroad take great pleasure in reading and appreciating them. Whether the analysis based on these versions are reasonable and convincing rests on the readers' comments. In addition, the data from translation journals and translation textbooks correspond to our criterion of using good versions. The data can be employed to justify and test whether the author's viewpoints are logically reasonable.

1.4 Outline of the Present Study

The book consists of five chapters: Chapter One Introduction, Chapter Two Theoretical Background for This Study, Chapter Three Sociosemiotic Approach and Chinese Parody Translation, Chapter Four Application of Sociosemiotic Approach to Translating Chinese Parody, Chapter Five Concluding Remarks.

Chapter One is an introduction to the book, including the significance and the aim of the research as well as the methodology adopted in the research, the source of data and the structure of the book.

Chapter Two establishes the theoretical background for Chinese parody translation. The formation and development of Sociosemiotic

Approach and its relevant research are discussed and advantages of Sociosemiotic Approach to Chinese parody translation are explored.

Chapter Three explores the sociosemiotic nature and criterion of Chinese parody translation in order to explain why Sociosemiotic Approach is chosen for Chinese parody translation after carrying out the study of Chinese parody including its definition, classification, characteristics and functions as well as its English counterpart.

Chapter Four deals with Chinese parody translation practice under the guidance of Sociosemiotic Approach in order to build a convincing connection between the "means" used in examples and the "guidance of Sociosemiotic Approach". It begins with the necessity and possibility of achieving equivalence when rendering Chinese parody including its translatability, and explores how to establish equivalence when rendering Chinese parody, i. e. , how powerful is Sociosemiotic Approach for its guidance in translating Chinese parody, and then moves on to analyze the specific "means" for translating Chinese parody in the light of Sociosemiotic Approach.

Chapter Five summarizes the major findings as well as the limitations of present study and proposes some suggestions for further study.

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