国外翻译研究丛书之十八

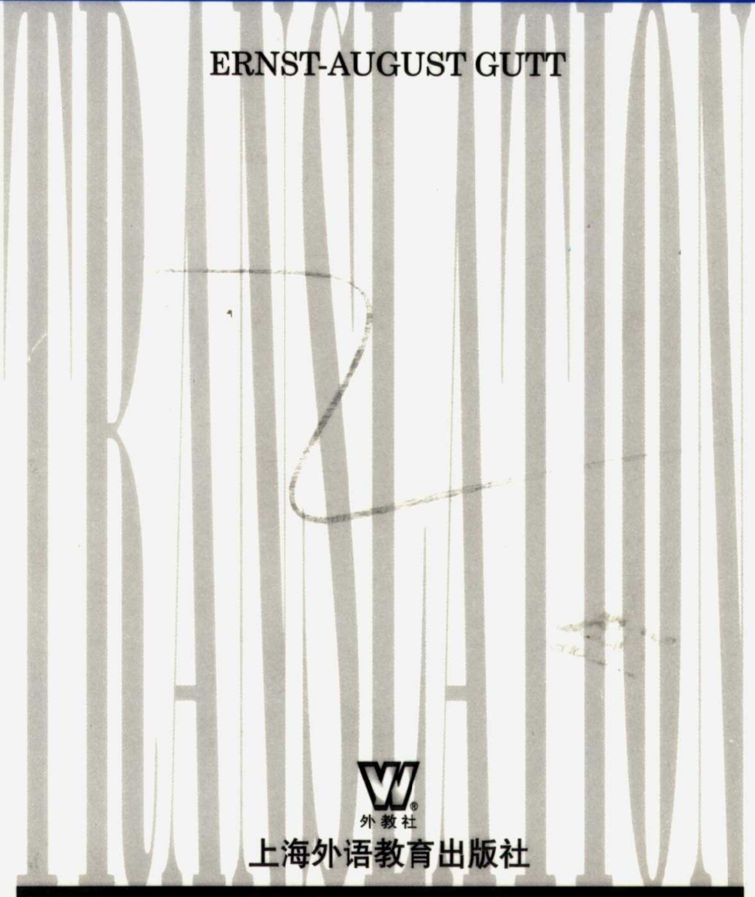
TRANSLATION AND RELEVANCE

Cognition and Context

翻译与关联

——认知与语境

ERNST-AUGUST GUTT



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出版说明

近年来，国内翻译研究取得了很大进展，有关翻译研究的丛书也出了多套。不过，长期以来，国内引进的原版翻译著作匮乏，不少研究都是根据二手资料；另外，学习翻译专业的研究生人数越来越多，这种状况若继续存在，将十分不利于学科的发展和翻译人才的培养。鉴于此，上海外语教育出版社约请了多名国内翻译研究著名学者分别开列出最值得引进的国外翻译研究论著的书目，并对这些书目进行整理、排序，最终确定了准备引进的正式书单。该丛书涉及的论著时间跨度大，既有经典，也有新论；内容的覆盖面也相当广泛，既有翻译本体的研究，也有跨学科的研究。这套丛书的引进将会满足翻译专业研究生教学原版参考书和翻译理论研究的需要。

上海外语教育出版社谨以此丛书献给我国的翻译学界。

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借鉴和创造

（代序）

上海外语教育出版社从成立以来一直是我国外语教育最优秀的后勤部和侦调部。因为它不但为我国各个层次（尤其本科与研究生层次）的外语教育提供了多种高水平的教材、教参和工具书，而且还出版了多学科、多语种和多系列的中文版和外文版的学术著作，比如“现代语言学丛书”、“牛津应用语言学丛书”、“美国文学史论译丛”、“外国文学史丛书”、“剑桥文学指南丛书”、“当代英语语言学丛书”以及列入国家及教育部规划的人文社科重点项目的外国语言文学、文化等方面的图书等。为了适应我国现代化建设和教育改革的需要，还出版了一批国际金融、对外贸易、涉外保险、国际经济法、国际新闻和管理科学等方面的教材与专著。这些著作在外语的学科建设与学术研究以及复合型人才培养等方面都在发挥着强有力的侦察、调研和指导作用。这是外语界有口皆碑的。

随着中外文化交流的纵深发展以及我国现代化建设对人才的需求，对比语言学和翻译学近些年来在我国有了较快的发展，最突出的证据就是①外语类硕士博士点上研究对比与翻译方向的学生在逐年迅速增多，而且我们的高校已经有了翻译学院和翻译系（当然还太少）。②外语专业的学生考中文、法律等其他人文社科专业的硕士、博士以及反方向的走向已经起步。这种跨学科的人才已成为人才资源竞争的最主要对象，因此发展趋势定会看好。上海外语教育出版社为适应这种高层次人才培养和新学科建设的需要，不但积极出版国内关于对比研究和翻译研究的专著和论文集，最近又推出了原版“国外翻译研究丛书”，这套丛书时间跨度从古代到现代，所选书目皆为译学发展史上有里程碑作用的名家名著，堪称译学经

典。他们计划分批出版，以满足读者的需求。

这套丛书的出版首先可以解决国内翻译教学原版参考书多年匮乏的困难，真可以说是我国翻译教学与理论研究的及时雨。我想学习和关心这个学科的师生和其他人士定会对这套书的引进为之欢呼，为之祝贺。

这套丛书的价值还在于能大大促进我国翻译学科建设的发展。译学学科的发展依赖于研究者在三个方面的深入研究和结合。一是对本国译学的继承性研究；二是对外国译学的借鉴性研究；三是对翻译实践和翻译教学中新问题的探索性研究。只有这三者研究深入并结合好了，才可能从经验与技巧逐步升华为具有科学性的译学理论。这三个方面的研究，改革开放以来，在我国已取得了很显著的成就，这是有目共睹的。翻译学在我国已于20世纪80年代末有了独立学科的初级形态，90年代又有了新的发展，对学科的独立性以及理论体系的结构与功能有了更多的探讨。依照学科建设的规律和研究现状，我们尚需在上述三个方面加大研究力度，而这套丛书就是借鉴性研究的主要资源。从这个角度讲，这套丛书的引进也是我国文化基本建设的重要工程之一。

在新的世纪，文化（包括各类科学技术）会多方面快速深入人类的日常生活，各国之间的交流会空前深广，因此翻译的功能会逐步扩大，实用性翻译人才的需求量定会空前增加。这就要求我们除了做好高层次研究型人才的培养以外，还应十分重视实用性人才的培养和应用译学的研究。我想出版社一定会关注和引导译学建设的理论研究与应用的发展趋势。

杨自俭
青岛海洋大学六三居室
2001年3月28日

出版前言

本书作者E·格特(Ernst-August Gutt)率先将关联理论应用于翻译研究中,指出翻译是一种言语交际行为,是与大脑机制密切联系的推理过程,它不仅涉及语码,更重要的是根据动态的语境进行动态的推理,而推理所依据的就是关联性。作为交际的翻译,在源语的理解和翻译过程中人们对语码的选择所依赖的也是关联性。该论点在翻译学界引起不小的反响。本书在关联理论的基础框架内探讨了翻译研究中颇具争议又引人注目的重要问题,既为翻译理论研究者深入清晰地阐述了观点,又为实践者提供了明确的指导。

本书脉络清晰,行文流畅,第一章以对现状的简要介绍和评论开头,朴实流畅,引人入胜。作者在第二章介绍了斯博伯(Sperber)和威尔逊(Wilson)提出的关联理论的基本概念(1986a),提纲挈领,渐入佳境。在这个部分,作者进一步探讨了在用解释性语言来表达另一种语言的意思的过程中,哪些因素在其中起作用。在第三章到第七章中,作者梳理了翻译的各种流派,同时展示关联理论在解释各种各样的翻译现象中是如何得以应用发展的。有些时候,译文与原文是否完全吻合对交际过程并不会产生很大的影响,第三章就此“翻译”现象进行了探讨。第四章对译文必须保留原文语义的观点进行了建设性探讨。作者在第五章指出,许多翻译完全可以被视为“语际解释”,进而表明基于这种观点,翻译的概念可以极其宽泛。第六章探讨了将翻译的范围缩小到只包含原文文体风格的可能性。为此,作者提出了“交际线索”的概念。第七章中,作者表明,无论广义的还是狭义的翻译概念都是关联理论体系里自然衍生的产物,并研究了利用翻译进行成功交际的必要条件,以此结论为整个论述画上圆满的句号。

本书集聚了作者多年实践和理论研究的经验和心血,经过仔细

推敲和大量调研，又在第一版的基础上，增添了形式新颖、易于检索的“后记”部分，解答了翻译界同行针对第一版的提问，并对翻译研究中人们普遍关心的问题进行了分话题阐述，方便读者按研究兴趣进行查找，颇具参考价值。

全书语言朴实，例证生动，是翻译理论研究系统的有益补充。可以成为我国广大翻译工作者、英语教师、翻译研究人员和大专院校英语专业研究生、本科生及其他英语爱好者的有益的参考书，从而对我国翻译理论研究和翻译教学实践有所启发和帮助。

Preface to 1st Edition

This study is the outcome of a growing personal concern over the theoretical foundations of translation. As a member of the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), I have become closely involved with matters of translation. My linguistic work in Ethiopia under the Institute of Ethiopian Studies of the Addis Ababa University from 1976-1978, 1978-1982, and 1983-1987, and the attempt to deal with a trilingual situation in my own family (English, Finnish, and German) provided much practical experience in translation and its problems.

It was in 1981 that I first tried to formulate some of my concerns about the nature of the principles, rules, and methods advocated in translation and especially about their validity; much of the methodology seemed to make sense, some of it seemed questionable – but the worrying thought was that it remained unclear what reality, if any, these reactions reflected and how they could be dealt with objectively. Initially I tried to express my concerns in a textlinguistic framework, but the results were not satisfactory.

During my studies for an MA degree at University College London in 1982-83 I was introduced by Deirdre Wilson to the relevance theory of communication, which she was developing together with Dan Sperber (cf. Sperber and Wilson 1986a). The cognitive basis of the theory combined with its concern for both comprehensiveness and explicitness appealed to me, and in the years that followed I began to apply relevance theory to a few aspects of translation (Gutt 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988). The results were very encouraging, but it became quite clear that the complex nature of the issues involved required a prolonged period of concentrated research. So in 1987 I had the opportunity to return to University College London for doctoral studies under the guidance of Deirdre Wilson.

The results of my research surprised me; I had expected that relevance theory would help me to formulate a general theory of translation. However, within a year it became increasingly clear that relevance theory alone is adequate – there seems to be no need for a distinct general translation theory. Accordingly, the main thrust of this study, which is a revised version of my doctoral dissertation (Gutt 1989), is to explore a range of translation phenomena and show how they can be accounted for in the relevance-theoretic framework.

Chapter 1 begins with a sketch of the status quo and a critical evaluation. Chapter 2 introduces basic notions of relevance theory as found in

Sperber and Wilson (1986a), and goes on to explore further what is generally involved when utterances are used interpretively to represent other utterances.

Chapters 3 to 7 examine various views of translation, and at the same time show how relevance theory can handle various translational phenomena involved. Chapter 3 deals with instances of 'translation' where the relationship to the original seems incidental rather than crucial to the communication process. Chapter 4 examines the idea that translations should preserve the meaning of the original. Chapter 5 argues that much of translation can be viewed adequately as 'interlingual interpretive use', noting, however, that on this view the notion of translation would cover a very wide range of phenomena. Chapter 6 examines the possibility of a much narrower view of translation designed to preserve also stylistic features of the original. For this purpose, the notion of 'communicative clue' is introduced. Chapter 7 rounds off the discussion by showing that both the wide and the narrow view fall out naturally from the relevance-theoretic framework; it also investigates prerequisites for successful communication by translation.

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Preface to 2nd Edition

After one reprint, this book was out of print for a few years. However, requests for copies kept coming, and so I was glad when St. Jerome Publishing approached me and asked for permission to re-publish the book.

Developments since the original writing of the book did not seem to warrant a major revision, so the first seven chapters are essentially the same as in the original version, except for some minor corrections and updates. The changes in relevance theory introduced by Sperber and Wilson (1995) do not affect the core of the argument in this book, but they have been commented on in the notes at appropriate points.

However, a new chapter has been added in the form of a 'Postscript' to take up and respond to points of general interest raised in reviews and peer comments on the original publication. (For the convenience of the interested reader, the references to reviews and other peer comments of which I have become aware have been compiled in a separate listing; see the section 'Reviews and literature with comments on Gutt 1991', pp. 240-2.)

Ernst-August Gutt
October 1999

Acknowledgements

My thanks go to my colleagues at the Addis Ababa University who made it possible for my family and me to have the privilege of working and living in a linguistically and culturally rich environment. I especially thank the Silt'i people of Ethiopia who allowed us to live with them and to get first hand experience of both the enrichment and problems caused by cultural and linguistic diversity.

I want to express my heartfelt thanks and appreciation to Deirdre Wilson, my supervisor. It has been a great privilege and joy to work under her guidance and with her encouragement. I thank her for opening my eyes to the wonders of two of the most precious gifts we have: the human mind and the ability to share what is in it with others. My research has brought home to me in a new way the truth that we are 'wonderfully made' (Psalm 139:14).

I thank Neil Smith for his encouragement and for his comments on the dissertation which underlies this book. I thank Regina Blass, Ron Olson, Clinton Robinson, Ronald Sim, Dan Sperber, the staff and fellow-students in the Department of Linguistics, University College London as well as other colleagues for their feedback on my research. Of course the responsibility for the shortcomings of this book is entirely my own.

I want to express my gratitude for the financial help I received from my colleagues in the Eastern Africa Group (SIL) and from the Corporation Academic Scholarship Fund (SIL) in 1987-88, and for the University Postgraduate Studentship which I was awarded by the University of London for 1988-89.

Finally, a very special thank you goes to my wife Eeva and my children Hannele, Hannu and Hedi for supporting a husband and father whose mind was not always free to give them the attention they needed. It is my pleasure to dedicate this book to them.

Contents

Preface to 1st Edition *vii*
Preface to 2nd edition *ix*
Acknowledgements *xi*

1. The State of the Art – Some Critical Observations 1
- A New Initiative 2
- Reservations 3
  - The risk of (multidisciplinary) disintegration 3
  - The problem of determining the domain of the theory 4
  - The problem of evaluation and decision-making 7
    - Non-theoretical approaches 9
    - Equivalence 9
- A Problem of Scientific Method (Research Programme) 17
- Changes in Scientific Method 21
  - A shift in the domain of the theory 21
  - A shift from description to explanation 21
  - Translation as communication? 22

2. A Relevance-Theoretic Approach **24**
- The Inferential Nature of Communication 24
- Semantic Representations 25
- Context and the Principle of Relevance 26
- Descriptive and Interpretive Use 35
  - Interpretive resemblance between propositional forms 36
  - Interpretive resemblance between thoughts and utterances 39
  - Interpretive resemblance between utterances 41

3. Covert Translation **47**
- The Notion of 'Covert Translation' 47
- Translation – When all is Change? 54
- Descriptive Use in Interlingual Communication 56

4. Translating the Meaning of the Original **69**
- Conveying the 'Message' of the Original 69
- The Problem of Secondary Communication Situations 76
  - Secondary communication problems and 'dynamic equivalence' 79
  - Secondary communication problems and idiomatic translation 83

Translating the Same 'Message' by Interpretive Use? 98

5. Translation as Interlingual Interpretive Use **105**
Introduction 105
Faithfulness in Interlingual Interpretive Use 107
The Origin of Translation Principles 119
Conclusion 127

6. Translating what was Expressed **130**
Style – The Importance of the Way Thoughts are Expressed 130
Direct Quotation, Communicative Clues, and Direct Translation 132
Communicative Clues Arising from Semantic Representations 136
Communicative Clues Arising from Syntactic Properties 144
Communicative Clues Arising from Phonetic Properties 150
Communicative Clues Arising from Semantic Constraints on Relevance 151
Communicative Clues Arising from Formulaic Expressions 155
Onomatopoeia and Communicative Clues 159
Communicative Clues and the Stylistic Value of Words 160
Communicative Clues Arising from Sound-Based Poetic Properties 162
Conclusion 166

7. A Unified Account of Translation **168**
Direct Translation – A Special Case of Interpretive Use 169
On the Use of the Original Context 173
Partial Resemblance in Linguistic Properties as Translation? 177
Translation, Relevance and Successful Communication 179
  Risks of failure in translation 179
  Making intentions and expectations meet 190
Conclusion 198

Postscript **202**
A Decade Later 202
The Research Programme Shift (Paradigm Shift) 203
  The input-output research programme 204
  The competence-oriented research programme 205

Small wonder different evaluations 206
The same in the end? 207
The Unique Mandate of Translation 208
Equivalence of message or function is not enough 208
Translation as interlingual quotation 209
Some Important Consequences of a Quotation-Based Concept of Translation 211
Translation is an act of communication rather than a text genre 211
An aside on intentions 211
Translation is Communication between Translator and Target Audience 213
Translation cannot be Covert 215
The production of 'covert translations' involves translation but ... 216
Does it matter? 217
Manuals, tourist brochures, advertisements can be objects of translation proper 221
Translations can be Interpreted 'incognito' but ... 221
Translation Proper does not Depend on the Existence of a Concept of 'translation' in the Target Culture 222
The Perspective of Translation Practice 223
Toward a deeper understanding of 'meaning' 225
Applying the rules 226
Promises and Perils of Translation 228
Interpretation with a unique claim of authenticity 228
An authentic experience as well as an authentic message 229
Translation (alone) cannot necessarily guarantee successful communication 229
The subtle complexity of the translator's task 232
A Word on Cultural Translation Studies 235
Conclusion 236
General References in Postscript 239
Reviews and Literature with Comments on Gutt 1991 240

General Bibliography **243**

Index **250**

1. The State of the Art – Some Critical Observations

It is becoming commonplace for works on translation theory to acknowledge that there is a vast body of literature on translation, offering a wealth of observations and views on the subject.[1] Almost equally commonly this acknowledgement is followed by some sort of a caveat – expressed with varying degrees of candour – to the effect that the volume of the literature is not necessarily indicative of the degree of understanding reached. Steiner (1975:238) expressed this in the following words:

> Despite this rich history, and despite the calibre of those who have written about the art and theory of translation, the number of original, significant ideas in the subject remains very meagre.

Discontent seems to focus in particular on the lack of a comprehensive approach to translation that is both systematic and theoretically sound. For example, back in the sixties Levý observed:

> Only a part of the literature on the problem of translation moves on the theoretical plane. Until today most studies and book publications, especially on literary translation, have not gone beyond the limits of empirical deliberations or essayistic aphorisms. (Levý 1969:13, translation my own)

By the end of the 1970s, the situation seemed to have changed little, because Kelly introduces his history of translation theory and practice with the recognition that "a comprehensive theory of translation has proved elusive" (1979:1).

And so it has continued into the 1980s; in Bassnett-McGuire's view, "the systematic study of translation is still in swaddling bands" (1980:1); drawing an analogy to literary studies, Wilss (1982:11) sees the literature on translation as amounting to a "mass of uncoordinated statements" :

> Slightly modifying the phrase used by Bertold Brecht to describe literary scholarship as 'a mass of opinions', it could be said that the many views expressed on translation in the past centuries amount to

---

[1] For extensive reviews see e.g. Kloepfer (1967), Steiner (1975), Kelly (1979), Bassnett-McGuire (1980), Koller (1983). For bibliographies cf. e.g. Bausch, Klegraf and Wilss (1970/2, 2 vols), and Lehmann (1982).

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