ENGLISH-CHINESE & CHINESE-ENGLISH

Translation

英汉互译理论与实践

(理论篇)

张燕清 席 东 编

西北工業大學出版社

A Coursebook on English-Chinese & Chinese-English Translation

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【内容简介】 本书紧扣高等学校英语专业高年级翻译教学任务,阐述了英汉互译的基本理论知识。通过对英汉两种语言的对比研究,辅以大量译例,系统介绍了一系列常用的翻译方法及技巧。全书共分7章,介绍了翻译的基本知识,词、成语、句子、语篇等的翻译方法、技巧以及西方译论等。书后附有大量精选翻译练习,使翻译技巧与实践有机结合,培养学生翻译能力。

本书适于高校英语专业高年级学生翻译课程使用,也可供爱好翻译工作并具有中等以上英语水平者自学参考。

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作为一本教材,《英汉互译理论与实践》是为培养和提高英语专业本科生的实际翻译能力而编写的。它具有较强的实用性,其目的在于使具有一定英语水平的学生经过培训,获得一定的汉英、英汉翻译能力。本教材分上、下两册,上册为"理论篇",下册为"实务篇"。

本册(理论篇)的主要内容包括:

- 1. 翻译的基本知识及原则,包括翻译的性质、标准、过程等;
- 2. 翻译中的常见的问题和解决问题的方法(如词汇、搭配和成语、句子翻译中的难题和翻译方法等);
 - 3. 翻译方法的介绍:
- 4. Peter Newmark 所著《翻译教程》中有关"语篇分析""语言功能""翻译方法""翻译批评"章节的摘录;
 - 5. 句子和各类文体的英汉互译练习。

本教材最大的特点是用英语编写,重要的概念和术语配有汉语解释。这是因为本书的主要读者是英语专业的学生。该专业的学生的学期论文和毕业论文都是要用英语来完成的,课堂授课也以英语为主,因此本书旨在帮助他们以英语的思维来发现翻译中的问题,掌握解决问题的策略、翻译学的术语,学会如何分析原文、如何欣赏优秀的译文以及用适当的翻译方法来完成翻译任务。

为造就 21 世纪的翻译人才,编者在选择翻译练习材料的过程中,比较重视练习材料的时代性、实用性和广泛性。除所选题材多样、覆盖面广之外,本书还有两个重要的特点:一是具有一定的趣味

性,二是难度适中。书中多篇材料是笔者近两年在课堂教学中使用过的,颇受学生欢迎,能够调动起学生的翻译兴趣。所有练习未按章节配备,而是统一编排,以供教师和学生灵活选择使用。

由于作者的水平与经验有限,书中难免会有缺陷与错误,恳请使用本书的师生和其他读者批评指正。

编 者 2007年5月

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1. 1 General introduction to translation

(翻译概论)

In the development of human civilization, translation plays an active role in enhancing mutual understanding and promoting cultural exchanges among people and nations of different languages.

Translation practice has existed for thousands of years. As far as the origin of translation is concerned, a biblical myth is frequently quoted in various translation literatures. According to the Bible, the tale of the Tower of Babel, from Genesis 11, is an "explanation" of why there are so many different languages. "Tower of Babel" is called "the temple of the platform between heaven and earth". It is recorded in the Bible that once the whole earth had only one language and few words. And man wanted to build a tower with its top in the heavens, and then they could make a name for themselves. However when the lord came down to see the tower, he was unhappy with man's action, so he confused their language thus man could not understand one another's speech. From then on, men scattered over the face of the earth, and they left off building the tower. Therefore the name of the tower was called Babel, which means confusion. And consequently such confusion of languages makes translation indispensable in the

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inter-cultural communications.

Historically speaking, in China, the earliest recorded translation activity, concerning the interaction of Han people with the minority ethnic groups that scattered in the east, west, south and north who were once derogated as Yi, Rong, Man, Di respectively, can be dated back to Zhou dynasty that was 3,000 years ago. (Cheng Fukang, 2000) While in the west, translation studies can be traced back to the Roman scholars of Cicero and Horace in the first and second century before Christ. Horace's famous phrase "fidus interpres" used in his Ars Poetica indicated that the great Roman scholar had already paid attention to the translation phenomenon arising in the Roman social life. (Lefevere, 2001)

1.2 Notion of translation (翻译的概念)

As "the most complex thing in the history of cosmos," (Rechards, 1953) translation has various versions of definition. According to dictionary, translation is a rendering from one language into another, but it is of course too general. Translation, being so complicated an activity, has been defined differently.

Susan Bassnett, for example, says, "Translation is of course a rewriting of an original text." Wolfram Wilss puts it in this way, "translation refers to the inter-lingual transference which includes literal translation or even quite free translation". Petus Danielus describes it like this, "translation is a text written in a well known language which refers to and represents a text in a language which is not as well known".

Catford defines translation as "the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language

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(TL)". Sager Jakobson sees the translation process as a substitution of "messages in one language not for separate code units but for entire messages in some other language".

An approach based on the importance of preserving the effect of the original reflected in Nida & Taber's definition: "Translating consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style." Translating must aim primarily at "reproducing the message". To do anything else is essentially false to one's task as a translator. But to reproduce the message one must make a good many grammatical and lexical adjustments.

Nord sees translation from a functionist's point of view: "Translation is the production of a functional target text maintaining a relationship with a given source text that is specified according to the intended or demanded function of the target text."

These definitions demonstrate a fact that "there is a vast body of literature on translation, offering a wealth of observations and views on the subject." (Gutt, 1991)

Although there are all these varied opinions, one thing is commonly accepted: "translation" is a science with its own rules and principles for translators to abide by.

1.3 Criteria of translation (翻译的标准)

1.3.1 An overview of translation in China

Translation has been crucial to the introduction of western learning and the making of national culture in China. China has an over fivethousand-year long history of human civilization and a three-thousand-

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year history of translation.

The earliest translation activities in China date back to the Zhou dynasty (周朝,1100BC). The First Peak of Translation in China came in the Sui dynasty (隋朝,581—618) and the Tang dynasty (唐朝,618—907), although the translations were mainly of the Buddhist scriptures.

Translators in this period were mainly Buddhist monks. They not only had a very good command of Sanskrit but also had studied translation theory thoroughly. Since the translations were mainly on religious scriptures, they thought translators should: "① be faithful to the Buddhist doctrine, ② be ready to benefit the readers (Buddhist believers), ③ concentrate on the translation of the Buddhist doctrine rather than translating for fame."

The most important figure of the first peak of translation in China was the famous monk of the Tang dynasty — Xuanzang (玄奘,600—664), who was the main character in A Journey to the West.

At the end of the 16th century, with the arrival of western Christian missionaries, China came into contact with Europe, which had begun to overtake China in various scientific and technological fields. To facilitate their relations with Chinese officials and intellectuals, the missionaries translated works of western science and technology as well as Christian texts.

The missionaries were often assisted by Chinese collaborators, For these Chinese scholars, translation was not limited to passive reproduction; instead, the translated texts served as a basis for further research.

Although translations carried out during the Ming dynasty (明朝) were mainly on science and technology: mathematics, astronomy, medicine, hydrology etc., there were also some translations of philosophy and literature in this period.

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Technical translations during the Ming dynasty facilitated the scientific and technological development of ancient China, and thus foreign missionaries whose main purpose was to promote Christianity became the first group of disseminators of western knowledge.

The effect of the translations was that China was opened to western knowledge, and translation facilitated the scientific and technical development.

Western learning translation: The Opium War to the May Fourth Movement of 1919.

Foreign missionaries dominated scientific and technical translation initially, but Chinese translators, trained in China or at foreign universities, gradually took over the transmission of western knowledge.

1.3.2 Yan Fu's triple criteria(严复的三字翻译标准)

After the Sino-Japanese War of 1894—1895, Yan Fu (1853—1921), one of the most important figures in the modern period of translation in China, was the most influential translator and translation theorist.

Yan Fu won his reputation as a famous translator also as a result of his contribution to translation theory. He set down the triple translation criteria of "faithfulness, expressiveness and elegance", which he called"信、达、雅". These criteria influenced the development of translation practice and theory for almost half a century after it came into being.

Faithfulness requires that the meaning in the target language should be faithful to the meaning of the original. 信:准确地传达原文的内容。
Expressiveness is the requirement of intelligibility of the target language text. The translated text should be in accordance with the language

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rules of the target language. 达:译文语言应通俗明白。

Elegance requires a translation to be esthetically pleasing. 雅:译文应有美学价值。

There have been different comments and critiques of Yan Fu's triple criteria in the modern history of translation in China. Most translators or translation critics accepted Yan Fu's "faithfulness" and "fluency", but some thought that "elegance" is not always valid. Take for example the context of a court trial, a man is sued for having said in English: "You are a damn fool", and it is rendered as: "你是个很不智慧的人". The translation has no doubt gained in elegance, but will certainly not be a faithful translation of the original and might even affect the outcome of the case.

In the application of Yan Fu's criteria, people have put forward a variety of new standards. Liu Zhongde (刘重德) changed Yan Fu's triple criteria as "faithfulness, expressiveness and closeness" (信、达、切).

Faithfulness means that a translation should be faithful to the content of the original. 信:信于原文内容。

Expressiveness means that a translation should be as expressive as the original. 达:具备原文一样的表现力。

Closeness means that a translation should be as close to the original style as possible. 切:尽可能切近原文风格。

Alexander F. Tytler's translation criteria are:

A translation should give a complete transcript of the ideas of the original work. 译文应该完全传达原文的思想。

The style and manner of writing should be of the same character as

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that of the original. 译文的风格和笔调应与原文一致。

A translation should have all the ease of the original composition. 译文应像原文一样流畅。

Though there have been different opinions on Yan Fu's triple criteria, they have not been abandoned by translators in China. His theory successfully guided technical translation during the late Qing dynasty and the early Republic of China. Yan Fu, himself, with his translation output and translation theory, opened a new chapter in the translation history of China.

1, 3, 3 Lun Xun and his views on translation

Lu Xun, one of the great writers of China, translated more than 200 literary works from 14 countries. He thought that a translation is a creative work, but that it differs from literary creation. The value of a translation lies in its faithfulness to the original text. He insisted that the main purpose of translation is to introduce the culture and social lives of foreign countries to the Chinese people. He advocated that there should be an exotic atmosphere in the translated works, which would familiarize the readers with the foreign cultures. He was against those who liked to borrow words or phrases from the target language in their translations for the sake of intelligibility and fluency; he believed that literal translation of culturally loaded words was one of the important means of enriching the mother tongue.

1. 3. 4 Fu Lei and the transfer of the original spirit: spiritual resemblance (神似)

Most of the translators in the period (1949—1978) took a literary approach to the study of translation theory. They pointed out that

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literary translation, which requires a higher standard, is different from general translation. Literary translation is an act in which the translators reproduce exactly the artistic conception of the original text into the target language; this requires literary translators to have not only a good command of the two languages but also mastery of artistic creation processes and the ability to catch the literary spirit of the original text. The transfer of the original spirit, advocated by Fu Lei, was regarded as one of the main tasks of literary translation. Fu Lei is one of the famous translators who translated from French into Chinese. He wrote: "As a product, translation is like imitating a picture. What is more important is the likeness of spirit not resemblance to the original one."

Thus, an artistic literary translation depends on the transfer of the spirit of the original text; if the original text is an artistic work, it should remain artistic after it is rendered into another language. The advocating of "being alike in spirit" for literary translation does not deny the significance of "being alike in appearance". A good translation product should both be "alike in spirit and appearance". If, for linguistic and cultural reasons, the translator is in a dilemma as to whether to transfer either the appearance (grammatical and syntactic structure etc.) or the literary spirit, he should, according to Fu's principle, sacrifice appearance to spirit.

1.3.5 Qian Zhongshu's view on translation: sublimation(化境)

In 1964, Qian Zhongshu, a member of the cultural elite in present-day China, put forward his "transmigration theory" for literary translation. Qian borrowed the Buddhist term in summarizing his theory of literary translation. A literary translation is like the act of transmigration in which the soul and the spirit of the original text

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remain in the target text even though the carrier of them, the language, has changed. Qian's requirement for literary translation was so high that he himself had to admit that it was impossible to transmigrate everything of the original text to the target language, and that perfect transmigration of the original text into the target language was just an ideal.

1.3.6 The principle of "faithfulness and smoothness" (忠实通顺原则)

The above review represents the confusing nature of translation criterion. With no doubt, as a goal set for translators to strive for, translation criterion needs simple and clear redefinition. In modern translation circle, the principle of "faithfulness and smoothness" is well acknowledged as translation rules for translators to abide by.

Faithfulness requires that a translation should be faithful to the content and style of the original.

Smoothness requires that a translation should be as expressive and natural as the original.

"Faithfulness" is the first important principle of translation. Translation is not creation. The translator ought to convey the author's ideas faithfully and exactly. He has no right to alter the meaning of the original to suit his own taste. Lu xun pointed out, "Translation does not tolerate any mistakes." To understand this point better, let us look at the following example.

Example

Although schoolmistresses letters are to be trusted no more nor less than churchyard epitaphs; yet, as it sometimes happens that a person departs his life, who is really deserving of all the praises the