

翻译

批评

新思路

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博士文库

**A New Approach to
Translation Criticism**

胡德香 著

—— 中西比较语境下的文化翻译批评

Cultural Translation
Criticism from the
Perspective of a
Comparison
between Chinese
and Western Studies

本书提出了一套崭新的文化翻译批评理论，该理论有助于我国翻译理论与翻译学科的建设，使翻译批评更加客观、科学、系统地进行。



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如有质量问题,由承印厂负责调换

序

翻译批评作为当代翻译研究的一个组成部分,越来越受到人们的重视,各种见解文章不少,但是对中西翻译批评有深度的比较研究还不多见,胡德香的研究对此进行了系统的梳理,并在此基础上大胆地尝试建立一种新的文化翻译批评模式。

本书是在作者博士学位论文《中西比较语境下的文化翻译批评理论》的基础上形成的。前三章基本是综述性的,比较详细地讨论了中西翻译标准与翻译批评的异同,并分析了产生差异的深层文化及思维原因,为构建自己的文化翻译批评模式做了厚实的铺垫。第四章作者从总结、比较中西译论和翻译批评标准的异同出发,颇有创见地提出了“文化翻译批评”的概念,并对它的原则、任务、方法及标准进行了论述。书中对文化翻译批评标准的讨论比较周密,提出了一个多元开放的动态系统模式。第五章可以说是基于这个模式的个案研究。作者以《简爱》的两种译本为例,进行了她所主张的文化翻译批评实践,旨在具体说明:传统的单向度语言评价既不能反映译者选择背后的原因,又无法揭示翻译的文化意义。翻译动机、意识形态以及由译者个人经历所产生的主体性等文化因素都在翻译中起作用,这一点通过比较《简爱》的两种译本可以得到证明。

本书结构严谨,语言流畅,层次清晰,分析严密,具有一定的新意。作者花费了大量时间做前期准备工作,反映出她在翻译批评领域的知识积累和理论思考。不足之处是作者对西方翻译理论肯定偏多,西对中国翻译理论似责备有余;另外,文化翻译批评的理论还有待进一步发展。希望她在今后的研究中进一步深化和完善该理论,使之更具广泛运用的价值。

张春柏

2006年10月20日

内容简介

翻译批评的历史几乎和翻译一样悠久,因为自从有了翻译,便有了对翻译的评论。尽管有文字记载的翻译活动开展了约两千年,对翻译批评的研究却长期局限于语言文字层面,因此阻碍了翻译理论的整体发展。随着全球化的推进,翻译起着越来越重要的作用,翻译学科内对翻译质量的关注也日益增强,各个学派从不同角度探讨译文评价的可行模式。传统翻译批评理论集中在对译作语言方面的研究,从忠实或对等角度为翻译评价提供具体标准,之后关注的焦点从译文的语言层面转变为文本和语境层面,在此基础上提出了功能主义的模式和方法。尽管20世纪的最后20年开始转向对翻译外部环境的研究,但仍然存在问题。人们仍然把更多的注意力放在翻译的语言因素上,翻译批评尤其缺乏系统的原则和理论指导,对翻译质量乃至翻译理论的发展造成严重影响。因此,本书主要探讨这方面的问题。

全书共分五章,外加导语部分和结论部分。导语部分介绍本研究的目标、结构、基本原理和意义。第一章是中西翻译标准及翻译批评的理论综述。第二章讨论中西翻译标准的异同。第三章比较中西翻译批评在理论和实践上的区别。作者列举了在中国盛行的几种翻译批评模式和几位有代表意义的西方理论家的作品,展示他们是如何开展翻译批评的,在此基础上总结了中西翻译批评的异同以及由此引发的思考。

在第四章,作者初步构建了文化翻译批评的模式。这是一种作为翻译学科有机组成部分的崭新批评理念,对中国现行的翻译批评模式存在的问题提出挑战。首先,原作的权威地位遭到质疑。其次,当代翻译理论的发展也对传统批评形成了威胁。第三,传统批评模式因缺乏理论系统性,在实际运用中非常局限,缺乏有效性。基于上

述分析,作者提出了文化翻译批评的概念,即在翻译与文化理论指导下把翻译看作文化现象或产品加以描述、解释和评价。接着作者讨论了文化翻译批评的原则、任务、方法及标准。

第五章是对《简爱》两种译本的文化批评案例研究。对两种译本的语言与文化所做的分析,揭示传统的单向批评不能完全反映译本的价值。尽管语言文本批评对翻译学习者或培训机构很有帮助,但它存在不可避免的局限性,片面注重译本的语言特色面忽视了翻译所涉及的文化因素。现有的对《简爱》译本的评价,或把它看作外国文学作品,没有考虑到翻译特征,或把它看作纯翻译作品,过分强调译文的可读性与可接受性而忽视了翻译的文化制约因素。

结论部分总结全书的特点、创新及局限。本研究顺应当代世界的主流思潮,立足于当代文化及翻译理论,在比较中西翻译标准与翻译批评的基础上提出文化批评的概念及其原则、任务、目的、方法与标准,有着明确的理论意识,其目的是加强理论研究,探索翻译批评的客观规律,以便理性地开展该项活动,进而有助于翻译作为一门独立学科的研究。文化翻译批评具有多样性、灵活性、历史性和跨学科性的特征,是从中西对比语境的崭新角度探讨翻译批评,其视角更加广泛灵活。但是,本研究也指出,文化翻译批评研究尚处于初级阶段,该批评的理论性与系统性还有待进一步完善。

Abstract

Translation criticism is almost as old as the history of translation itself. Although translation activities have existed for nearly two thousand years, investigation or research on translation criticism has long been restricted to the linguistic level, which hinders the development of translation studies as a whole. With the advancement of globalization, translation has become more and more important and there is an increasing interest in translation quality within the discipline of translation studies. Different schools have made efforts to provide possible solutions to this issue by establishing potentially viable models. Traditionally academic theories in the field have focused on the linguistic aspect of translation, providing criteria for translation criticism from the perspective of faithfulness or equivalence. Later the focus of attention shifted from the language level to the textual and contextual levels, upon which a functionalist framework was proposed. Although there was a turn towards the "external" environment of translation in the last twenty years of the 20th century, there are still some problems. Much attention is still paid to the linguistic elements of translation. In translation criticism, in particular, there is a lack of systematic theories or principles for evaluation. This poses challenge to the improvement of translation quality as well as the development of translation theory. Therefore, the present research will address this problem.

Besides introduction and conclusion, there are five chapters in this book. It first introduces the aim, structure, rationale and significance of the research. Chapter 1 makes a literature review about the theories on translation criteria and criticism in both China and the West. Chapter 2

discusses the similarities and differences between Chinese and western studies on translation criteria.

Chapter 3 concentrates on the comparison between Chinese and western translation criticism in both theory and practice. We presented the prevailing models of translation criticism against the unsatisfactory translation quality in China, stated how translation criticism is done in the West and discussed a few representative western theorists and their works about translation criticism. Then we summed up the similarities and differences together with the reflections over the comparison.

In Chapter 4 we introduce cultural translation criticism, a new notion of criticism as an integral part of the disciplinary translation studies. Challenging the problems of translation criticism prevalent in China, it points out that first of all the authoritative position of the source text is questionable. Secondly, the development of modern translation theory has posed threat to traditional translation criticism. Thirdly, the traditional models of translation criticism are also found limited in its practical validity for lacking theoretical foundations and systematicity. Based on the above analysis, this chapter proposes cultural translation criticism, i. e. to make, under the guidance of translation and cultural theories, descriptions, explanations and appraisalment of translations as cultural phenomena or products. The principle, task, method and criteria of cultural translation criticism are also discussed.

Chapter 5 is a case study of the cultural criticism of two Chinese translations of *Jane Eyre*. From the textual and cultural analysis of the two versions we conclude that the traditional unilateral criticism does not fully reveal the value of a translation. Although textual linguistic criticism is helpful for translation learners or at training institutions, it has inevitable limitations because it is confined to the language characteristics of the translated text and neglects the socio-cultural elements con-

cerning the process of translation. The existing reviews about the translations of *Jane Eyre* either regard it as a foreign literary work without considering the translational features or concentrate too much on the acceptability and readability of the target text (TT) regardless of the controlling factors of the translation.

The last part is the conclusion of the whole book. It sums up the contribution and characteristics of the present research, as well as its limitations. In accordance with the major tide of contemporary thought in the world and attempting to strengthen the theoretical studies on translation criticism, the author puts forward cultural translation criticism and its related principle, task, purpose, method and criteria with a clear awareness of theory construction. Characterized by multiplicity, flexibility, historicity and interdisciplinarity, the research probes into translation criticism from a different angle, i. e. in the context of comparisons between Chinese and western studies. It adopts a wider vision and more flexible perspectives based on contemporary translation and cultural theories. However, it also points out that the research is still at its primary stage and needs to be perfected in terms of the theoreticity and systematicity. Therefore, further studies on cultural translation criticism are expected in the future.

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Introduction

Since no culture can avoid communicating with other cultures, and since translation is a kind of linguistic phenomenon, a sign-governed human communication, a nation's history of communication with other nations can thus be considered a history of translation. Jakobson (1992: 145) even thinks that all acts of communication are acts of translation; the meaning of any linguistic sign is in its translation into another sign. The history of translation is necessarily that of the way different cultures have communicated with each other, from which we can see how different cultures meet, conflict and complement with each other, as well as subvert and integrate with each other. In this book I will examine the problems concerning the evaluation of translated text and the various cultural phenomena as revealed in translation. Translation is a very complicated process, in which there is always a tension between two forces, i. e. the infiltrating forces of foreign cultures and the resisting forces of the indigenous culture. Therefore, it is necessary not only to discover their similarities and differences, but also to investigate their mutual influences and interactions, as well as the consequences.

The past few decades have witnessed the unprecedented boom of both translation and translation studies along with the advancement of globalization. However, the quality of translation has remained a problem, and translation criticism still stands at a low level. Traditional theories of translation criticism have focused on how to prescribe criteria for both translators and critics. The scant studies in this limited area are rather amateurish in nature, as most of them are satisfied with random

remarks on individual experiences of translation. There is a lack of systematic probe into the criteria of translation, according to which translation criticism is carried out.

The traditional translation studies in China, as is put by Luo Xinzhang (1984), have followed a line of its own systematic development with *An Ben* (adherence to the original text), *Qiu Xin* (faithfulness), *Shen Si* (resemblance in spirit) and *Hua Jing* (sublimation) as the representatives of translation standards in different historical periods. Those standards have made up the major stories of Chinese translation studies before the first half of the twentieth century. The subsequent studies have surrounded the issues of the principles, criteria and the methods of translation that had been discussed by the previous scholars or theorists. For example, the criteria of *Zhongshi*, *Liuchang*, *Tongshun* (faithfulness, fluency and gracefulness) by Lin Yutang (1984), and *Xin*, *Da*, *Qie* (faithfulness, expressiveness and closeness) by Liu Zhongde (1991), amongst others, are the improved versions of the 3-character rules of *Xin*, *Da*, *Ya* (faithfulness, expressiveness and elegance) proposed by Yan Fu in 1898. It was not until the late 1980s that Chinese scholars began to reflect on the limitations of traditional theories. The 1990s was a period with numerous discoveries and developments in translation studies. During this period, western translation theories, such as Eugene Nida's theory of dynamic equivalence, began to be introduced into China. By the end of the twentieth century, most western translation theories had received scholarly attention in China.

The last three decades have seen considerable growth in Chinese translation studies under the influence of modern western theories. But problems still exist. Although there are an overwhelming number of scholarly publications on translation, few attempts have been made to investigate the characteristics of Chinese and western translation criticism,

not to mention more scientific and effective models of assessing translated works. Without deep-going systematic researches on the activity, the books and papers on translation criticism lack the necessary theoretical thrust and scientific analysis of the principles and rules of translation criticism. Despite their insights into the issue of criteria, these reflections tend to be prescriptive and focus more on the techniques of translation with little attempt to establish a general theoretical framework. Take *Theories of Translation Criticism* by Jiang Zhiwen & Wen Jun published in 1999 as an example, the theoretical discussion, which accounts for only one third of the whole book, is no more than a mixture of papers with scattered ideas of different people throughout the ages. None of the papers puts forward a rigorous theoretical system about translation criticism.

As for the scope of research, studies have usually been done within a Chinese view only, without a comparative perspective between Chinese and western theories. A typical representative may be Tan Zaixi (2000), who has put forward the concept of the "Contrastive Science of Translation" belonging to the sub-division of "The Specific Science of Translation" within the whole system of the science of translation. He has also proposed the purpose, task, scope and method of the "Contrastive Science of Translation". The comparisons between Chinese and western translation theories, including the principle, aim, method as well as the criteria and process of translation, are provided as specific topics for study. (Tan Zaixi, 2000: 171 - 182) However, up to now, few serious efforts have been made according to Tan's framework. Very few research papers deal with the comparisons between Chinese and western translation criteria or criticism. In the past years some attempts have been made to establish translation studies as an independent discipline either on the basis of modern western translation theories or along

the lines of our own tradition. Those who doubt the effectiveness of the effort have tried to prove that translation is a matter of craftsmanship involving only special training or innate properties of translators. Some strongly oppose the idea of establishing translation as a subject or independent discipline on the grounds that translation theory is useless to the practice of translation. (Zhang Jinghao, 1996: 8 - 9) This incongruous voice has seriously hindered the progress of translation studies.

Owing to the fact that translation is increasingly viewed as an act of interdisciplinary, cross-cultural communication rather than simple linguistic rendering, it is important to study it from different perspectives. Therefore, we suggest that a comparative perspective between Chinese and western translation theories should be adopted. A comparative view will help us gain insights into not only the characteristics of Chinese and western translation studies, but also the new developments in the West so as to find the gap between China and the West in this respect and the ways to further improve our translation studies. A contrastive perspective will also help us get a better understanding about the *status quo* of translation criticism in China and in the West because we think it is essential to have a better idea of where we are before we can catch up with our western colleagues. It is hoped that this research will be able to move a step forward towards the goal of establishing a systematic theoretical model for translation criticism.

0.1 The aim and structure of the research

Since there can be no translation criticism without taking into account the criteria of good translation, this book will start with a review of the studies on translation criteria in both Chinese and western traditions to see what has been achieved. It first makes a survey of the major ap-

proaches to translation studies that have been done both at home and abroad, in order to draw an overall picture of the discipline and the background of the present research. Both Chinese and western translation studies concerning translation criteria and criticism have undergone a process of development from traditional to modern approaches. Although the current turn has been more culture-oriented, a more systematic and theoretical descriptive work about the principles, the method and the criteria of translation criticism is still needed. The book discusses major ideas or models of translation criteria and criticism in the Chinese and western traditions with the aim of establishing a new model of translation criticism by constructing a theoretical framework. The principle, task, criteria and methods of the new model are also investigated. Given the importance of translation quality and the need for rational translation criticism, this framework is intended to offer theoretical help to translators and critics in their practical work. The book is organized as follows:

Besides introduction and conclusion, this book consists of five chapters. First of all, there is a general introduction about the background of the research on the basis of the socio-cultural needs and the *status quo* of the studies on translation criteria and criticism in China and the West. It also states the aim and structure as well as the rationale and methodology of the book. Chapter 1 reviews the representative theories or ideas on translation criteria in Chinese and western traditions with a general evaluation of the achievements made so far. Major Chinese theories since Yan Fu at the end of the 19th century along with the line of development are summarized. Western theorists who are influential on Chinese translation studies are introduced from Tytler at the end of the 18th century to the present. Chapter 2 discusses the similarities and differences between the two traditions as well as the socio-cultural reasons behind them. The problems in Chinese studies on translation crite-

ria are also discussed. Chapter 3 starts with a discussion of the three prevailing models of criticism, i. e. the unsystematic anecdotal criticism of the translated text based on comparisons between source text (ST) and target text (TT), the value judgment and the theory-proving model. Then it tackles the existing problems in China's translation criticism. To offer a comparative perspective, it introduces in detail a few western approaches to translation criticism such as the models of Juliana House (1997) and Katharina Reiss (2004), etc., so that we have a better idea of how westerners carry out translation evaluation. Chapter 4 is the core of the book. It first states the limitations of traditional linguistic translation criticism. Then it puts forward and expounds the concept of cultural translation criticism, including the task, purpose, principles, method and criteria of the new approach. A set of systematic criteria is proposed with detailed explanations. Chapter 5 is a case study of the criticism of two Chinese versions of *Jane Eyre* based on the theoretical framework proposed in Chapter 4. The major characteristic of the study is to evaluate the two versions in the light of related cultural elements. It is in fact an assessment of the TT from the external environment of the product, including the process of translation, rather than mere language-oriented evaluation or isolated textual criticism. The last part is a conclusion of the whole book with an evaluation of the breakthroughs and drawbacks of the present research.

0.2 The rationale and research methodology

This research is to expose the interrelations between cultural factors and translation. Therefore, we integrate Chinese and western translation theories in the contemporary time, especially those proposed by people who see translation as cultural interpretation and communication and deal