



Edited by Luo Xuanmin

国际译联第 **4** 届亚洲翻译家论坛论文集之三

跨学科翻译研究

Translation Studies: An Interdisciplinary Approach



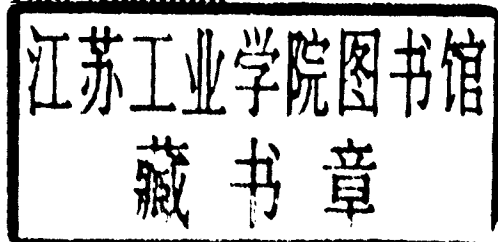
FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS

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图书在版编目 (CIP) 数据

跨学科翻译研究: 英文/罗选民主编. —北京: 外文出版社, 2007

ISBN 978-7-119-04727-0

I. 跨... II. 罗... III. 翻译-文集-英文 IV. H059-53

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字 (2007) 第 023634 号

跨学科翻译研究

主 编: 罗选民

责任编辑: 李 芳

装帧设计: 姚 波

出版发行: 外文出版社

地 址: 中国北京西城区百万庄大街 24 号 邮政编码: 100037

网 址: <http://www.flp.com.cn>

电 话: (010) 68320579/68996067 (总编室)

(010) 68995844/68995852 (发行部)

(010) 68327750/68996164 (版权部)

电子信箱: info@flp.com.cn / sales@flp.com.cn

印 制: 汇鑫印务有限公司

经 销: 新华书店 / 外文书店

开 本: 1/16

印 张: 20.75

字 数: 380 千字

装 别: 平

版 次: 2006 年 12 月第 1 版 2006 年 12 月第 1 版第 1 次印刷

书 号: ISBN 978-7-119-04727-0

定 价: 38.00 元

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国际译联第四界亚洲翻译家论坛获中华人民共和国
教育部国际会议资助。

**FIT Fourth Asian Translators' Forum has been funded
by the Ministry of Education of China.**

本书获韩国亚洲问题研究基金赞助出版。

**This book is subsidized by
the Korea Foundation for Asia Studies.**

Contributors:

Martha P. Y. CHEUNG, Hong Kong Baptist University, China

Cay DOLLERUP, [www. language-international. net](http://www.language-international.net), Denmark

FENG Zongxin, Tsinghua University, China

Martin FORSTNER, Johannes Gutenberg Universität, Germany

Edwin GENTZLER, University of Massachusetts Amherst, USA

Theo HERMANS, University College London, UK

C. J. JEONG, Macquarie University, Australia

KONG Wai-ping, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, China

Hannelore LEE-JAHNKE, University of Geneva, Switzerland

LUO Xuanmin and GUO Yu, Tsinghua University, China

PARK Hyang-seon, Busan KyungSang College, South Korea

PARK Ock-sue, Yeungnam University, South Korea

QIAN Duoxiu, Beihang University, China

SI Xianzhu, Jiangxi University of Finance & Economics, China

SUN Yifeng, Lingnan University, China

WANG Jong, University of Hawaii, USA

Michael WATSON, Meiji Gakuin University, Japan

YU Shiyi, Tsinghua University, China

ZHANG Meifang, University of Macau, China

ZHOU Yuncheng, Tsinghua University, China

Introduction: Translation, Cognition and Interdisciplinary Studies

LUO Xuanmin and GUO Yu
Tsinghua University

Translation studies witnessed great changes in China in the past few decades. People may still remember that only two decades ago when scholars talked about Western translation theories, they were surely to mention Nida and his functional equivalence. While talking about domestic theory, the topic would shift to Yan Fu's translation principles: "faithfulness, expressiveness and elegance." In short, translation had been discussed mainly as a linguistic matter. At the same time, Western scholars, like André Lefevere and Susan Bassnett, introduced the concept of "the cultural turn" in translation studies, they encouraged translation studies in a cross-cultural context beyond mere technical analysis. Later, more theories like feminism, post-colonialism, cultural criticism, etc. were introduced to translation studies. Today a fact has been commonly acknowledged that translation is never a matter of verbal shift between two languages, instead, it is a cultural performance. Cultural studies of translation did introduce a new dimension for translation studies, but it doesn't mean the whole thing. People now are aware that translation is better to be approached from an interdisciplinary perspective.

In the West, during 1950s and 1960s translation studies was largely regarded as a branch of linguistics, applied linguistics, to be exact. Since 1970s translation scholars, however, have realized that linguistic theories were far from sufficient to solve the complicated and intriguing problems popping up in translation. They began to borrow, theoretically and methodologically, from a number of such relevant discourses and disciplines as anthropology, philosophy, psychology, communication theory, literary theory and cultural studies. Hence a proliferation of translation

theories in such an age marked by pluralism. A few approaches from which translation can be studied came to the foreground, for instance cognitive perspective, cultural perspective, polysystem perspective, communicative perspective. Now it is obvious that translation studies has broken the confinement of any one existing discipline and gradually grown into one with its unique academic discourses and research methods and deeply imbued with the interdisciplinary tone.

The serious call for an interdisciplinary study in translation appeared in China in the new century. In 2002, a symposium with the theme of "Translation and Interdisciplinary Studies" was held at Tsinghua University. The symposium was co-organized by Tsinghua University in Beijing and Lingnan University in Hong Kong. Scholars and experts from England, Denmark, U. S. A., Australia, Canada, Japan, China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Macao, gathered to discuss the issue of translation within an interdisciplinary framework.¹ Translation was approached from the perspectives of anthropology, literary criticism, cultural studies, corpus linguistics, sociology, etc. Some of the conference papers were published in a special issue of *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology*. In the same year, Tsinghua University set up a Center for Translation and Interdisciplinary Studies with a purpose to encourage interdisciplinary studies among different but relevant departments of the university. In 2004, FIT Fourth Asian Translators' Forum was held at Tsinghua University. The forum is held every three years and is the largest in translation studies in whole Asia. The Tsinghua Forum, co-sponsored by Translation Association of China (TAC) and Tsinghua University, turned out to be a great success. The theme of the forum was "Translation, Cognition and Interdisciplinary Studies". The forum had attracted delegates from 28 nations discussing translation studies from different perspectives. The Executive Board Members of FIT attended the opening ceremony of the symposium. Three volumes of the conference proceedings (including this English one) have been published with a strict selection from more than two hundred conference papers. These papers do not necessarily have to claim their approaches to translation as interdisciplinary perspectives. But the papers, sixty in three volumes, can show the new development of translation studies and the

¹ See Luo Xuanmin and Zhang Jian, "Considerations on Varieties in Translation Theories," *Chinese Translators Journal*, No. 2, 2003. pp45-47.

true nature of translation from a broader horizon. In 2006, the “International Conference of Translation and Interdisciplinary Studies” was held in Shanghai Jiaotong University,² which attracted many scholars at home and abroad. Interdisciplinary studies as a phrase is widely accepted in China.

What does the word “interdisciplinary” mean? What is the relation between translation and interdisciplinary studies? What role does cognition play between translation and interdisciplinary studies? These questions are important.

The word “interdisciplinary” means two things. From the outside, it is a method which is applied to different disciplines to absorb nutrition from each other. From the inside, it is an epistemological search, because in translation, there are too much indeterminacy and flexibility. The investigation of the nature of translation discipline is never exhausted; instead, it has a long way to go. So we say, interdisciplinary is not something unique to translation studies. It is applicable to other disciplines in arts and humanities, because no discipline can declare its ability of establishing laws to explain natural phenomena within its own domain. What it can do is to account for a small part of the world knowledge. By interdisciplinary investigations a discipline can better be recognized and keep itself in constant development.

Translation and interdisciplinary studies are inseparable. It would be hard to imagine a self-disciplined translation studies. In this sense, we say translation has a closer and stronger relation with interdisciplinary studies than other disciplines. This is determined by the nature of translation. On the one hand, translation has benefited from interdisciplinary studies; on the other hand, translation studies should share its contribution with the development of other disciplines. For example, a foreignized translation may help native writers in their literary creation; translation texts can provide important corpus for contrastive analysis in linguistic investigations. In the long run, translation can shape the formation of a nation’s new literature.

What role does cognition play in the process of interdisciplinary translation studies? Cognition can play an important part in interdisciplinary translation studies. It can help us to recognize our knowledge in a new configuration so as to es-

² The conference was co-sponsored by Shanghai Jiaotong University, Shanghai University of Engineering and Huazhong Normal University in May 2006.

establish an envisioned and mature discipline of translation; it can help us better organize our knowledge from various sources so as to make full potentials of our translation performances. I am sorry to say, in the past many literary translators were treated (by themselves) as vocational workers, or technicians, acted like a go-between among different languages, forgot their role as cultural mediators and abandoned their task of introducing foreign literatures at large as Lu Xun had done nearly a hundred years ago, needless to say the task in search of truth in translation studies. Though translation studies as a discipline is developing fast, it still calls for radical questions for the nature of translation transcending disciplinary boundaries. We should be aware of the history, theory, methodology and subject matter of particular disciplines from which translation is enriched and nourished. To achieve this purpose, a cognitive consciousness is of absolute necessity.

This collection of papers is the third volume of the proceedings of FIT Fourth Asian Translators' Forum. The first two Chinese volumes have been published by the Foreign Languages Press in 2005.

The three papers of the first part develop around the theme of cognitive science and translation studies. In "Translation, Metaphor, and Cognition: How Newness Enters a Culture" Edwin Gentzler begins with two hypotheses: (1) a genius theory of cognition in which a very bright person individually perceives new and "original" ideas in a quasi-divine way; and (2) a translation theory of cognition in which new ideas are imported and introduced in a new culture via translation and metaphor. He specifically explores the cognitive process of translating from Chinese, an ideographic language, to English, an alphabetic one, and studies the interdisciplinary connections of metaphor translation with such closely related fields as cognitive linguistics and philosophy. He also offers some insightful thoughts on the connections between metaphor, cognitive and cultural factors from a poststructuralist perspective, suggesting that translation, like metaphors, performs a dual function — referring and creating. He further suggests that scholars of translation studies explore cognition, translation and metaphor in a multicultural and interdisciplinary fashion, like what Homi Bhabha did with migrant and diasporic writing. In the conclusion he equates the cognitive capacities of good translators in history with those of geniuses, thus greatly upgrading the translators' status. Hannelore Lee-Jahnke presents new methods of process-oriented translation training which stress on the functions of emotion and motivation in the cognitive process. The paper be-

gins with a reflection on the newly emerged approach in translation didactics, namely the cognitive approach in translation studies, and its intimate relationship with the cognitive approach in linguistics. Descriptions on the different instruments used in class, such as questionnaires and other tools, the learning outcome and the improvement of proficiency achieved by these means, constitute the core of the paper. The third and final part deals with the preliminary results of an interdisciplinary research project with the Department of Neurology of the University Hospital of Geneva, and the prospects for applying this type of research to translation training. In "A Schematic Analysis of the Translator's Cognitive Process" Zhang Meifang investigates the interpretation process of the translator and discusses how "meaning" is construed and then conveyed in a more or less creative way by the translator. Bell's schematic model of communication and translation is used as an analytical instrument in the investigation of the translation of two water-related metaphors. The result of the research shows that the translator's cultural background and his experience determine how much he gets out of the original text and how he reconstructs the target text.

The second part of the volume is composed of a group of papers concerning text analyses and translation criticism. Texts specially treated here cover several languages — Chinese, Japanese, Korean and English — and range from the canonical literature to official documents. Yu Shiyi's paper firstly explores the development of sinological translation in the context of the western sinological studies, pointing out that the evolvement of sinological translation is closely linked to the study of Chinese history in the West. With the ever-increasing achievements of Chinese translators in cultural communication, the connotation of sinological translation expands so much as to cross the western cultural and geographical frontiers. The latter part of the paper makes a study of the debate on sinological translation between H. A. Giles and Arthur Waley in the early years of the 20th century. This research offers the reader a glimpse of the important principles of translation adhered to by early modern sinological translators and reveals that many of the controversial points therein remain hot issues for translation studies today. In "A Slave's Wit: Early Japanese Translations of the Life of Aesop," Michael Watson discusses a few salient issues in the complex textual history of Aesop reception in Europe and the history of Aesop translations within the Japanese tradition. The paper makes a case study of two of the twenty editions of Aesop translations, the first

edition published in 1593 by the Jesuit Mission Press and entitled *Esopo no fabulas* (“Aesop’s fables”), and the last, published with illustrations in 1654, and entitled *Isoppo monogatari* (“the Tales of Aesop”). Park Hyang-seon’s paper draws the reader’s attention to the fact that in modern era when the translation of Korean culture and literature is enthusiastically carried out in South Korea, little effort has been made in translating Korean modern Sijo poetry into English. The paper argues that Sijo poetry, as a unique literary form, deserves translators’ special treatment and is well justified to be presented to the global readers. Based on her translating experience, the author puts forward some translation strategies for the rendition of Korean modern Sijo poetry into English. *Xixiang ji*, a canonical Yuan drama on the Chinese stage, has been widely commented on through history at home and abroad, and been translated into many foreign languages such as Japanese, Korean, French, German and English. Wang Jong’s paper makes a thorough exploration of the idealism of romance hidden in the play by looking into the historical criticisms with an objective view. Kong Wai-ping’s paper contends that in the endeavor to enhance the effectiveness of communication, there has been a changing trend in the English-Chinese translation of official documents in Hong Kong over the last three decades. Samples of bilingual texts of two different types of official documents, namely, letters and government notices, are analyzed. With the English samples serving as the source texts, target texts written both in the classical language and in the vernacular are examined. Discussions are conducted on how these target texts conform to the communicative conventions of their language and culture. For the purpose of tracing the changing trend in translation, it is scrutinized how the textual features of the sample translations written in the classical language give way to those of the sample translations written in the vernacular, stylistically, semantically and syntactically. It is also discussed how the production of the target texts in the vernacular results in their readability and acceptability in the target community. In the conclusion the author owes the change of the trend in the translation to the change in the language policy of the Hong Kong government which is inextricably tied to social needs.

In part three are collected a group of papers on translation teaching. In his paper “Translation Teaching and Translator Competence and Their Relationship to the Market: A Necessary Economic Turn?” Martin Forstner pertinently points out that today’s higher education is more and more geared to the market demands, which is

also true with foreign language teaching. Translator education institutions accepted this market orientation and tried to prepare their students for the growing translation market. In the paper the position of translator education in applied translation studies is justified, and its task and training approach are discussed. Park Ock-sue's research focuses on the assessment of Korean translation graduate students. In the paper the author examines two literary source texts and students' translations to find out various types of students' errors. Linguistically-oriented approaches are adopted to assess the translation quality. To obtain statistics of translation students' errors, the qualitative method is used in the analysis of the source texts on the one hand and the quantitative method through error analysis is used in analyzing target texts on the other. A useful curriculum for translation students and the ways for them to develop and improve their translation skills are presented in the final part of the paper. Based on the curriculum development trends in the fields of general and language education, C. J. Jeong examines the curriculum development in the field of translation and interpreting in three categories: content, process of development and evaluation. The author purposely looks into Korean and Australian T & I training institutions, choosing three T & I graduate schools in South Korea that are believed to provide the most typical T & I training in the country and a postgraduate T & I program offered by the Department of Linguistics of an Australian university as one of the types in Australia. In the final part the author concludes that the objective model of curriculum development is more appropriate than other models for T & I schools in developing students' proficiency in specific skills. Some suggestions are put forward to improve the curriculum development in T & I graduate schools in South Korea and Australia.

The fourth part of the collection concerns the construction of translation studies. In "Rethinking the Framework of Translation Studies" by Cay Dollerup, such issues as the relationship between translation theory and practice, and a re-orientation of translation studies are discussed and the concept of "translation" is re-defined with illustrations. Sun Yifeng discusses the issue of the mediation of cultural tensions in translating foreign otherness. Irrespective of its original design or intention, one of the ineluctable outcomes of translation is cultural displacement and alienation, as such anxieties about the danger of cultural intrusion, disruption and contamination, which threaten to undermine linguistic and cultural identity, are compounded by misperceptions concerning the unsettling nature of cross-cultural

communication. The author believes that tensions and conflicts generated by linguistic and cultural dislocations due to translation can be explained in terms of different cultural markers axiomatically ingrained in the translated text which is, however, subject to the manipulation of cultural meaning and significance. The politics of cultural interpretation is charged with cultural tensions in the creation of meaning, thereby governing or determining the condition and outcome of reception. Cultural attitudes, among other things, are both influenced by and capable of influencing translation strategies because the target reader may be simultaneously repulsed by and attracted to an alien cultural experience of reading a foreign text in translation. Therefore, cultural difference may be dismissed, overlooked or treated seriously in a given situation. In general, translation moves circuitously but inevitably toward a reconciliation — no matter how artificial and unsustainable — with the cultural, political, and ideological dimensions of the source text in order to address the task of cross-cultural communication. Theo Hermans' paper intends to discuss the problem of translator irony. Translators have been nameless heroes in witnessing and enabling the progress of human history for centuries, but the status of translators has not been adequately discussed by researchers. Translation is of interest, culturally and historically. Translation builds identities and communities because of the particular angle it develops on those goods as it negotiates their passage. In translations, translators express their own views about what they translate in more subtle, indirect ways. Irony seems a useful concept in this connection because it is a two-sided, double-tongued kind of speech in which what is left unsaid matters as much as what is said, and the difference between the said and the unsaid reveals an attitude, an evaluative angle. Based on vast investigations, the author has discussed the translator irony, and finally pointed out that translator irony need not be played out exclusively between translators and their original texts. In a sense, translator irony can be a form of intratranslational intertextuality. In “*Ji* (寄), *Xiang* (象), *Didi* (狄鞮), *Yi* (译) — A Study of Four Key Terms in Ancient Chinese Discourse on Translation”, Martha P. Y. Cheung analyses several terms used in ancient China to refer to the activity/activities now called *fanyi*, tracing the pattern behind the semantic jogging for position amongst these terms, and providing a reading of the significance of such a phenomenon. The author's purpose is twofold. On the one hand, she means to highlight the constructed nature of the prevailing notion of *fanyi*, to problematize it, and to unsettle its established

meaning, the better to provoke theoretical discussions on and about *fanyi*, and to stimulate critical thinking about the use and usefulness of traditional Chinese discourse on translation. On the other hand, she intends to provide a response to the recent call for a non-Eurocentric, international translation studies by advocating for a concerted effort to study the conceptualisations of translation as they evolved in different cultures, with a view to eventually developing a general theory of translation that truly has general relevance.

The papers in the last part evolve around the theme of interdisciplinary translation studies. Following the distinction of two levels of language, object-language and metalanguage in modern logic and language-philosophy, Feng Zongxin assumes that while object-language forms the dominant narrative discourse, metalanguage is also important since various features related to it focus readers' attention on the narrative code by highlighting certain words or phrases, representing characters' speech or providing detailed information on their verbal behavior with adverbials, tags of direct and indirect speech, occasionally accompanied by implied authorial comments. As metalinguistic features work on a higher level, they pose problems for literary translation, which is largely an enterprise of representing the narrative message. By drawing data from some classical works, the paper discusses metalinguistic features that defy literary translation on several levels of stylistic analysis. It is found that while some metalinguistic features are translatable with the help of corresponding typographic notations and footnotes showing the original code, they may be contextually bizarre and stylistically inappropriate for the target language text; others are essentially intranslatable and problematically mistranslatable judging from linguistic-stylistic perspectives. The paper concludes that since metalinguistic features form prominent traces of authorial artificiality in striving for narrative verisimilitude, the literary translator is faced with an arduous task of dealing with this aspect of literature. From a systemic-functional linguistic perspective, Si Xianzhu's paper discusses such issues as translation process, intention conflict between source text and target text, and ideology in translation. Zhou Yuncheng presents a formalized version of Putman's semantic theory for natural kind terms like "water", aiming at highlighting some of the problems that are relevant to understanding the nature of translation. There has been no operative standard or model for accuracy, the first priority in science and technology translation. Qian Duoxiu proposes in her paper a corpus-based computer-aided approach to it,

and illustrates how to do the computer-aided checking. The corpus selected is part of the bilingual texts of the *Pharmacopoeia of the People's Republic of China*. With the help of technical tools, the author has found that the *Pharmacopoeia* is in need of substantial linguistic revision and cannot fully reach its goal. So she proposes improving it linguistically and in a systematic way, again with the aid of technical tools. This first attempt at a corpus-based computer-aided approach to accuracy in Chinese-English medical translation shows that the operative approach put forward can have both academic and commercial implications for the assessment and improvement of the translation of other texts that are domain-specific and linguistically repetitive.



The Opening Ceremony of FIT Fourth Asian Translators' Forum



The Main Venue of FIT Fourth Asian Translators' Forum



- ▲ Professor Lin Wusun, advisor and former executive vice president of the Translators Association of China
- ▶ Professor Xie Weihe, vice president of Tsinghua University