

# 翻译与对比研究

——2002年汉英对比与翻译国际研讨会论文集

## TRANSLATION AND CONTRASTIVE STUDIES

PROCEEDINGS OF 2002 INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM  
ON CONTRASTIVE AND TRANSLATION STUDIES  
BETWEEN CHINESE AND ENGLISH

潘文国 主编

Edited by  
Pan Wenguo  
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Mackie Chase    Jan Walls

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

With the growing interest in cross-lingual and cross-cultural communication between China and the rest of the world, an International Symposium on Contrastive and Translation Studies between Chinese and English was held in East China Normal University, Shanghai, in August 2002. The Symposium was jointly sponsored by China Association for Comparative Studies between English and Chinese (CACSEC) and Department of International Studies of ECNU. Over 300 people from China, Britain, United States, Canada, Singapore, France, Germany, Greece, as well as Hong Kong SAR, attended the conference and many papers were presented, either in plenary sessions or in the nine panels for different themes. The papers covered a wide area of researches and many proved of high academic values which aroused great interest among participants. After the conference, strong desires were voiced to compile the proceedings to include as many articles as possible. After much discussion and consideration, we decided to edit two books for the purpose, one in Chinese and the other solely in English. The Chinese one was edited by Professor Yang Zijian, Chairman of CACSEC, Professor Fu Huisheng of ECNU and me, with the help of Professors Huang Guowen, Lian Shuneng, Lü Jun, Shao Zhihong, Wang Dongfeng, Wang Hongyin, Wang Yin, Xu Yulong, Zuo Biao of the Association, and the English one, which is presented here, becomes the chief responsibility of Professors Fu Huisheng, Luo Xuanmin, and myself, aided by Canadian scholars Mackie Chase, Jan Walls and Zhenyi Li.

After months of work including much correspondence through

internet to change ideas and editing policies, both books are finally ready for publication. My thanks first go to CACSEC, its chairman Professor Yang, and leaders of the Department of ICS, who sponsored the Symposium, and then to the above-mentioned scholars who spent great efforts in selecting and compiling the papers. My special thanks go to Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press and its director Professor Zhuang Zhixiang that have rendered continuous support for the publication of the CACSEC conference proceedings including the present two books. I wish also to thank the Department of ICS, the Centre for Intercultural Communication, University of British Columbia, Canada, and David See-Chai Lam Centre for International Communication, Simon Fraser University, Canada, without whose generous funding, the publication of the English version might not be possible. The directors of the last two institutions, Doctors Mackie Chase and Jan Walls are so kind that they even write a *preface* for the *Proceedings* which makes it even more welcoming.

**Pan Wenguo**

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## **Preface:**

### **Lost and Found in Translation**

**Mackie CHASE<sup>①</sup>, Jan WALLS<sup>②</sup> and Zhenyi LI<sup>③</sup>**

*Ah, the humiliation, the misery of failing to amuse! Telling a joke is like doing a linguistic pirouette ... I don't try to tell jokes too often, I don't know the slang. I have no cool repartee. I love language too much to maul its beats and my pride is too quick to risk the incomprehension that greets such forays. I become a very serious young person, missing the registers of wit and irony in my speech, though my mind sees ironies everywhere.*

Hoffman, E. *Lost in Translation*.

Penguin Books, 1989. 118.

Translation makes communication across languages and cultures possible. Through translation individuals attempt to exchange information, opinions and feelings in order to achieve a

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shared meaning. But at the same time, meaning can get lost or distorted. Words are usually seen as the basic tools of translation, even though we know that the greater part of meaning is conveyed non-verbally. The challenge for the enlightened translator, then, is to find optimal means to use all available tools to create understanding of not only the “whats” of something said or written, but also the “hows”, “whos”, “wheres”, “whens” and “whys,” all of which may have been taken for granted by the original writer/speaker and reader/listener.

Translation not only makes cross-cultural communication possible, it also may enhance one’s understanding of the structure and dynamics of the mother tongue. In the historical development of the Chinese language, for example, it was not until the Six Dynasties period, when scholars were feverishly working to translate Buddhist sutras into Chinese, that they discovered “the four tones” of the Chinese language. It was during this period that Shen Yue wrote his famous “Table of the Four Tones,” Wang Bin wrote the “Treatise on the Four Tones,” and Liu Shanqing wrote the “Principles of the Four Tones.”<sup>①</sup>

Extremely important discoveries like this were made possible through comparative and contrastive studies between Sanskrit and Pali on the one hand and Chinese on the other. We might even say that current interest in contrastive analysis of different ways of organizing ideas and events into structural units, using Chinese and English as the contrastive media, as

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① Zhu, Jianing. “The Penetration of Buddhism and the Rise of Vowel Classification in Chinese.” *International Journal of Buddhist Studies*. Inaugural Issue. December 1991. 252.

Chauncey Chu does in his paper, is helping us to learn more about the significance of our own discourse even today.

For many centuries, the focus of translation has been on literature, books, documents, and other written texts. Scholars of translation worked mostly on matching transference of the “whats” from one language to another. Buddhist works were translated across Asia and around the world, the Bible was translated throughout Europe and around the world, and scholars have worked to translate political documents. Literary translation has been the medium for creation of new literary forms as Bowman points out in his article.

More recently, scholars have been shifting their attention from translating words on paper to translating the meaning of texts and speech using multiple mediums of communication. We can exchange words not only through printed texts, but also face to face and ear to ear over the Internet in “virtual” situations. Both the sender and receiver are involved in transforming words into meaning. Through these new mediums, translators can convey “what is said” and “how it is said” to the receiver.

Although written translation can transfer meaning (or the “whats”) across cultures, oral translation and dubbing really cannot adequately transfer style, tones, speed, emotions, and silences (the “hows” of the language). A recent poll in Shanghai has shown that increasing numbers of local people are willing to watch Hollywood movies with subtitles in Chinese rather than watch a movie that has been dubbed. The interviewers discovered it was not because more Chinese people have learned English. Spoken English with its accents and idioms is still

difficult for most Chinese people to comprehend. The primary reason was that Chinese like to hear “how they talk to each other” in the movie rather than “what they said to each other.”

What can a translator do to convey elements of style and intention? Challenges such as these are not new, but they are more common in this century. A thousand years ago, Chinese translators were restricted by the limits of “communicable” Chinese words to introduce all the strange new “whats” and “hows” that were found in Buddhist books. They created many new words, terms, and even pronunciations to overcome these cross-cultural obstacles. The word “fo” [Buddha], for example, is the only word pronounced in that way so far in Chinese because “f” and “o” do not represent any other syllable when pronounced together in Chinese.

If that was the first time Chinese translators had to face cross-cultural communication challenges, then the second tide came in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when Europeans increased both trade and warfare with China. The founder of modern Chinese translation theory, Yan Fu (1854 – 1921) pointed out the Three Principles of translation. According to Professor Pan Wenguo, they are “sincerity (toward the reader),” “communicability,” and “norm.” “Communicability” again was put forward when Chinese people, for the second time in their history, encountered people, concepts and different communication styles from different cultures.

Now, a hundred years later, the third tide has arrived when more frequent communication and cooperation between Chinese and “foreigners” take place in joint venture offices, videoconferences, in Internet communities, and at many other

international events and venues. Therefore, it is the time to review the challenge of “communicability.”

These Proceedings present some of the latest research on translation and comparative studies between Chinese and English. Coincidentally, one of the focuses is “communicability,” which is far above and beyond mere semantic content equivalence. For example, Tseng looks at the impact of different interactive patterns between Chinese and American speakers in translation, which is more on the “hows” than on the “whats.” Some fine studies on sports metaphors (Huang) and film title translation (Tse) demonstrate how socio-cultural variables play significant roles as obstacles to effective communication across cultures. On foreign language teaching and international education, Cui provides some non-translatable examples and Chase and Li talk about different learning experiences, expectations and perceptions and the cultural impact such differences may have on knowledge exchange. All of these remind us that translation is an ambitious attempt to exchange meaning for people from different cultures, particularly when they have different expectations (Luo) and perceptions of each other.

Translators must continue to try to convey identical meaning and function in different contexts from the original language to the target one, knowing that their message may lose the balance between transmitting the “what,” “how,” “when,” “why,” “who” and “where.” And this just could be the destiny of translation: to be lost and found at the same time.



# PART ONE

## Translation Studies

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# **The Status of Equivalence in Translation Studies: An Appraisal**

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Equivalence has been a central notion in discussions of translation across the ages, whether these discussions are theoretical or practical. In fact, it has been so central that translation itself is defined in terms of equivalence, for example, in Nida (1959:19), Catford (1965:20), and Wilss (1982:62).

Not all early theorists made the mistake of defining translation itself in terms of equivalence however. Jakobson was one of the few early theorists who avoided the issue of equivalence altogether in his definition of translation (1959:233). This is later picked up and asserted more clearly in Frawley (1984:160).

In assessing the centrality of the notion of equivalence in translation studies we might note the following:

- The notion of equivalence is important because it is used in defining translation itself. This also makes it problematic because it is circular — translation is defined in terms of equivalence and equivalence is at the same time used for assessing and