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A THEORETICAL STUDY ON THE COMPILATION OF TRANSLATOLOGY DICTIONARIES

翻译学词典编纂之研究

Chinese Edition Written by Zeng Dongjing
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Translatological Terms and Translation Studies (in lieu of a preface)

Fang Mengzhi

Professor Zeng Dongjing has studied academic problems about dictionaries for many years. Starting from 1980s, he has been writing comments, ideas, suggestions and advice on all kinds of dictionaries in foreign language journals in our country. Later, he made a further research on dictionary problems—especially English-Chinese and Chinese-English dictionaries, based on lexicography and principles and methods of its relevant subjects, including descriptiveness and prescriptiveness of entry, principles of compilation, arrangement, contents, functions, index and retrieval system and so on. “Small brooks converge into a might torrent.” For many years, Professor Zeng’s achievement about lexicographical concrete evidence and theoretical studies presents a splendid sight. Through systematical arrangement, he has written the book *A Theoretical Study on the Compilation of Translatology Dictionaries*, which combines lexicography with translation studies so as to offer a unique monograph.

Although I compiled English-Chinese dictionary and dictionary of translation studies, but to lexicography, I was muddled. Only up to recent years have I paid attention to it with the further research in our educational circles. In this field I should learn from Professor Zeng Dongjing.

Now I want to talk about the trend of translation studies from the angle of translation terms, which is not irrelevant.

Terminology is one of the important signs which distinguish one

subject from others. Scientific, systematic and normative level represents the development level of one subject. Terminology is the key element of building up translation system and a mirror of studying the translational trend. Almost half a century, systematic and scientific modern translatology theory grows out of nothing which we can completely look into the clue from the accumulative process and construction of terms. Now we dare say firmly and nobly that translation studies as an independent subject has built up because there is a set of terms and basic concepts to describe its research object, purposes, methods, rules and theorem.

I . Concept, Terms and Subjects

If one subject wants to develop, first of all, its basic concepts must be scientific and systematic. “The results of natural sciences are concepts.” “The summary of social sciences and science of thinking is also concepts; each subject has its basic concepts (also called category).” (Lenin)

Terminology is a language symbol combined by form and meaning. Term meaning must take definite scientific concepts as its base and possesses mono rational meaning and emotional colouring, which is a basic element to describe and diffuse scientific concepts, definitions and rules and also a powerful tool to promote subject construction. Term construction is the only way to any mature subject, so is the development of translation studies, and through a series of terms forefathers’ academic thinking pass on from generation to generation. We absorb and draw on the forefathers’ academic results, at the same time we also understand and accept a series of terms. Terms like “faithfulness”, “expressiveness”, “elegance”, “origin”, “version”, “oral translation”, “written translation”, “truthfulness” and

“smoothness” have been handed down to this very day. Their connotations have not been changed and their basic concepts remain as much as usual.

Terminology and concepts are as interdependent as lips and teeth. Terms come from concepts in scientific research and in turn terms are used to describe and spread scientific concepts.

The connection between term and concept is most close. The impressions that terms produce in both sides of conversation are the same. In scientific study once a new concept has been formed, at the same time, the term which expresses the concept is possibly formed. The concept is the same, so is the term. But as a matter of fact, this is by no means the case. For example, to our surprise, there are more than ten expressions when we state our view about the translative skills of “the original form is affirmative, but the translation is negative, or the original form is negative, but the translation is affirmative”, such as “mutual transformation of affirmative and negative expression” and “using irony”. They are worthy of translators to keep on presenting the same concept among them which achieve the same goal through different means. We often see some different translations to some terms of foreign linguistics. According to their favor, commentators usually quote without selection, for instance, bringing the terminal divergences in linguistics to translation studies. There are many different translations to M. A. K Halliday’s three language functions: ideational function 意念功能、概念功能、达意功能; interpersonal function 交际功能、人际功能、人际关系功能; textual function 语段功能、组篇功能、篇章功能、语篇功能, etc.

Of course, there is the opposite case: a different man has a different concept to the same term. There was once so-called dispute between “literal translation” and “free translation” in the history, among them some were made due to unknown concept definitions. Some consider that literal translation is word-to-word

translation with the same form; others hold that it is literal translation that reads smoothly with the same form and content; however, Zhou Jianren went farther who professed that he usually uses “literal translation” and that the phrase similar to “lying on his back” was translated into “仰卧着”(Spinning-top Preface, Zhou Jianren), which is counted as “literal translation”. So we can see that at that time the concept of “literal translation” represents, on the one hand, dead translation focusing on form and on the other hand, free translation regardless of form. The gap between concepts of the same term is so wide that the dispute between literal translation and free translation cannot lead to a convergence. Another example, several years ago, there was a controversy about “translation unit” in our foreign language periodicals. Some people think that translation unit is an operation unit in translation transference process, maintaining that sentence is the basic translation unit. Others consider translation unit as structure unit, believing that we should treat sentence group as translation unit because “having translation above sentence level, we don’t have to stick to original sentence order and patterns, but we can reorganize and readjust according to text structure habits of translation.” Another some people treat translation unit as understanding unit, holding that using sentence or paragraph as translation unit is not desirable. Their reason for “why text may as well be accepted as a more comparative translation unit is that it possesses a bigger stage-context.” The term “translation unit” was introduced from abroad in mid-1980s. Although there are many kinds of cutting of translation unit such as sentence group cutting, semantic cutting and logical cutting, but what basic concept the term contains is identical. Generally speaking, we should respect the initiative definition. Term and its representative concept should be the same, otherwise, divergence of term definition must be brought with the difference of academic thought, even confusion.

II . The Production of Terms of Translation Studies

The research sphere of translation studies has been more and more extended; the study of ontology has been more and more meticulous; new thought, new concepts and new methods have kept on producing, so a large number of new terms were born in response to the needs of the times. The ways of new terms' production are no more than new words with new meanings, old words with new meanings, old words with new meanings through collocation and also borrowing meanings from relevant subjects.

2.1 New words with new meanings: "diasporic translator" is now translated into "离散译者", which is hard to accept. Originally, diasporic is diasporia's adjective, which perhaps comes from anthropology and its meaning is "移民社群". Its definition is "having living background of original country and understanding the country's culture". So under some context, diasporic translator may be translated into "海归译者", which is more apt than "离散译者" (but "海归" has its limitation, only referring to returning from oversea, but not from the countries contiguous to our inland). A lot of new words are absorbed with the use of new technology, such as "后编辑" (post-editing), "预编辑" (pre-editing), "网上机器翻译" (on-line machine translation) and "翻译记忆" (translation memory).

2.2 Old words with new meanings: at present some people use critical linguistics to do translation study. We are perfectly acquainted with the word "critic" which often shows that point out merits and demerits, comments on the good and the bad or particularly points out the shortcomings. But "critical" in "critical linguistics" is wholly different. "Critic" here means the habitual power relationship and ideology that reveal social life. Critical linguistics inspects the ideological meanings behind language through

the language characteristics of analyzing the text and their generative social and historical backgrounds so as to then reveal the relationship among language, power and ideology. Lefevere's rewriting (改写) does not mean one may take any material to rewrite. His "rewriting" is a kind of style, including translation, explanation, comment and editing collected works and so on. Such rewriting should be restricted by the culture and its ideology of target language.

2.3 Old words with new meanings through collocation: for example, "translation universals" is "翻译共性" or "翻译普遍性", meaning that translation language as an objective language is some language features of regularity relative to original language and target language in whole original language, or referring to some typical cross-language and some universal language features which are quite different from origin. All these features can be summarized as simplification (简化), explication (显化) and normalization (范化). With the rise of corpus translation study, the term can be more seen in relevant theses and monographs.

2.4 New words with interdisciplinary sciences: take being deeply interested in translation ethics abroad in late 1990 as example. When ethics was combined with translation, a quantity of new words joined in it such as "reproduction ethics", "service ethics", "communicative ethics" and "norm ethics". The reproduction ethics of translation can look up upon the ideal state of loyalty and the translation of sacred versions, demanding that translation must reproduce exactly the origin and its intention(s) without increase and decrease. Service ethics of translation treats translation as a kind of commercial service, requiring that translation must ultimately accord with clients' demand and carry out the objective discussed by both trustor and translator. The communicative ethics of translation puts emphasis on the communicative function of language, but not the description to

other cultures; cross-culture communicative purpose lies in co-operation and mutual benefit; the objective of communicative ethics of translation is to promote cross-cultural co-operation, so the translator must be loyal to his post. Norm ethics of translation benefits from both descriptive translation study and norm theory; the norm in translation culture stands for the expectancy of translation culture to version, so translator' moral must tally with norm and meet the expectancy of particular culture. In addition, translation psychology, translation rhetoric and translation philosophy all produce new words wholesale.

III. The Development of Terms of Translation Studies

Terminology is concentrated embodiment of an independent subject, the tremendous development in each stage of translation studies is bound to be reflected in the form of term. We here want to talk about it in stages.

3.1 Before 1950s - 1960s, that is to say, prior to language studies in translation, it can fully manifest the shortage of terms about translation theories and concepts, which have few commonly-used terms like literal translation, free translation, origin, version, loyalty, smoothness, author, translator, faithfulness, expressiveness and elegance. Glancing over the book *On Translation Studies* edited by Luo Xingzhang, in more than 100 articles, there are so many titles like "brief talk on translation", "humble opinion", "rambling talk on translation", "random talk on translation" and "about translation" adds up to 16. Among the articles written by great masters of translation, some are thoughts on books, some are advice of experienced people. Most of them have clear and definite themes. Adopting such vague titles at that time was against their will because there was lack of such terms. But now, if any author who uses such vague grandiose but impractical titles, I'm afraid they

are hard to be accepted by any periodical' editorial department because we can completely find out terms based on definite science concepts to express some point of view about translation research, pointing out the subject with suitable terms.

3.2 From 1950:- 1960s to early 1980s, translations studies in our country depend mainly on micro-research of random thoughts, impression and experience, due to at that time the just rise of linguistic studies about translation in our country. We have introduced sets of terms in language analysis of translation, especially the grammatical terms. *A Course In English-Chinese Translation* written by Zhang Peiji in 1980 still takes English-Chinese language comparison as the main thread and systematically summarizes and arranges the common-used methods and skills in English-Chinese translation so as to make morphology correspond with syntax in traditional grammar through selecting, extending and condemning of word meanings, transformation of part of speech, word addition, repetition, omission, mutual transformation of affirmative and negative expressions, passive voice translation, clause translation and long sentence translation and so on. At that time we introduced some important terms from linguistics, including those key terms like “transformation (转换)” whose original meaning in linguistics is a process or result of following certain rules and changing one or several language structures into another language structure, using the means of rearranging the order of structure elements, adding or omitting some elements. Translation studies changing the structure transformation happened in the same language into all kinds of transformation in different language and its denotation has been further broadened, which may be pronunciation transformation, meaning transformation or rhetoric transformation (it's not necessary structure transformation). Next, in translation studies, only the word “transformation” has derived many terms, such as conversion of sentence patterns, level shift,

grade shift, conversion of parts of speech, voice conversion, rhetoric conversion, visual angle shift, image shift, information shift and meaning shift ... endless shifts. We can see the great contribution to translation studies made by linguistics only from the word “transformation”, not to speak of sets of terms absorbed from grammar, lexicology, general linguistics and later from text linguistics and functionalist linguistics.

3.3 After late 1980s, a lot of terms of interdisciplinary sciences broke into the sphere of translation studies, so translation terms have rapidly expanded, e. g. “information (信息)” and its many derivatives such as redundant information, communicative information, textual information, information carrier and information shift in information theory; “model (模式)” and its many derivative terms such as meaning model, function model, transformation model and semantic-cognitive model in thinking science; “subject (主体)”, “object (客体)”, “category” and “methodology” etc. in philosophy.

3.4 Since the late 1990s, with the “culture turn (文化转向论)” in translation studies, we have got a small group of terms like “cultural translation”, “cultural imagery”, “acculturation”, “cultural misreading” and “cultural transplantation” that have entered into translation studies.

Such is the case; the terms of translation studies have gradually become plentiful through accumulation of different stages and have formed system, from another stages and have formed system, from another respect, which proves that *Translation Studies* has been built up.

IV. Terminology and System of Translation Studies

Any subject that wants to get an independent state must have an important factor; a term system with clear definition and well-

organized structure and a knowledge setup with stability. There is such an example. In 1985, while compiling *Chinese Dictionary of Local Customs*, the local customs research was on the upswing, but it didn't shape and build up subject system. The dictionary arranges the rich, detailed and thorough first-hand materials in classification so as to build up the subject structure of folklore (Zhao Wei, 2005)

The accumulation of the development of translation studies is synchronous. What degree translation studies develops, what degree terms system perfects along with it. I once wrote an essay and considered that the system and level formed during the developing process of translation studies can be divided by and large into "One body and three circles". "One body" is noumenon of translation studies, terms of noumenon, e. g. literal translation, free translation, lifelike, the acme of perfection, translation unit, criteria of translation, faithfulness, expressiveness and elegance, translatability, untranslatability, foreignization, domestication and the like, which has been bred and produced from ancient to present and unshakable base to translation studies close to noumenon is one circle structured by linguistics and its subdiscipline in 1950s to 1960s. Linguistics has brought with us groups of terms, such as text, register, coherence, connection, pragmatics, discourse, deep or structure, surface structure, contrastive analysis and so on, though those terms have not yet got into noumenon of translation studies, but their relationship with noumenon is the closest. With sets of terms and methods of linguistics, we make translation research go from the perceptual to the rational and from experience to science. In 1970s to 1980s, relative subjects like philosophy, thinking science, psychology, information theory, communication and semiotics have joined in translation research, besides noumenon, a new circle has been formed: the terms, such as category, ontology, monism, dualism, pluralism in philosophy, model, isomorph and prestructure in thinking science, cognition, reappearance .and

imagine in psychology, encode, decode, code and redundancy in information theory. The terms brought with translation research by each cross-discipline are considerable. Cross-disciplines make translation research go from single linguistics way to cross-disciplinary study of multi-discipline, from static state to dynamic state, and transits to comprehensive subject. The circle far from noumenon most is culture. Cultural research of translation thrives in 1990s, its meaning lies in wholly connecting translation with politics, economy, society, ideology so as to make translation research become in real meaning multi-disciplinary, multi-level, multi-angle and omni-directional comprehensive research.

In general, translation terms now presents a splendid sight, but explanation, argument and its system are far from sufficient and complete. No conclusion could be drawn about different views as to some basic terms. For example, the word “translation”, any translation textbook or an essay can make its definition sound plausible. There is still much disagreement between translation studies and translatology about their connotations and its subject name. One word with many meanings and many words with one meaning in terms are commonplace, which all run count to terms scientificity, singleness or conciseness, foretelling that the structure of translational research has a long way to go.

V. Look at the Trend of Translation Studies from Term System

From the angle of number of terms in my poor dictionary *A Dictionary of Translation Studies*, the terms of noumenon takes up 50%, each branch of linguistics plus cross-disciplinary subjects is not up to 50%. Since 1990s, the cultural turn of translation research has been growing tendency, but as compared to the two circles linguistics and poly-disciplines, it has fewer terms which due to the

vocabulary like ideology, power, feminism and post-colonism, they are not original cultural words. What most advantage we introduce the vocabulary like “ideology, feminism and postcolonism into translation research is that we have a new and effective research angle, which can let us change the research focus from text with to text outside, from focus on being loyal to origin to exploring varieties of translation, from language contrastive research to cultural research of translation” (Jiang Xiaohua, 2003). What’s more, the influence brought out by cultural turn is more ideological concepts, political stand, research perspectives and study trends than academic concepts itself, so its contribution to translational terms is limited. There are few terms about culture in my *A Dictionary of Translation Studies*. Recently, Professor Guo Jianzhong finally found that there are less than 100 relative cultural terms which are close to translation through cultural entry statistical research based on culturology. And among them, some exist originally, but not brought with after cultural turn. Therefore, terms produced by cultural turn are limited. I once wrote in an article that “The car of translation studies slows down after ‘cultural turn’”, one of the reasons is that translation research doesn’t bring with more new concepts and terms. Maybe we can say like this, cultural turn just brings us with a small group of new terms from culturology.

The academic base of cultural turn of translation is cultural studies. Culturology as an independent subject was established in 1960s, whose history is not longer than the history of translation. In cultural studies, the definition of the word “culture” is more than 150 kinds as well as “translation” in translation research, both differ greatly. As such, culturology is also a developing subject. The new ideas and new perspectives of the further development produced by cultural turn are the most important. Translation researcher should pay attention to the development of culturology, especially for the

form of new and important concepts and the production of relative terms.

No matter how cultural school excludes linguistic studies in translation, the contributions of linguistics to translation studies are the most fundamental. We may say like this, we now can't simply discuss translation problems cutting ourselves from relative linguistic term. "Although some students openly express that they don't belong to linguistic school and make comments from different perspectives, while once starting to make descriptive research or discuss teaching problems, they can't help use in quantity linguistic analytical tool. ... For example, later Andre Lefevere once criticized straight linguistic way, but in his own works, he utilized extensively concepts in mainstream linguistics such as power within and outside language." (Baker, 2005)

Linguistics has never stopped development, from morphology and syntax in 1950s to 1960s to text linguistics, communicative linguistics and functional linguistics after 1970s to critical linguistics in 1990s, from text analysis to context turn, linguistic way of translation research has been developed without stop with the linguistic development. On the other hand, contributions made by many cross disciplines to the system of translational term system are also great both in width and quantity. Crossing with a subject mean a group of terms will produce, for instance, if ethics crosses with translation, a group of basic terms about ethic combine with translation concepts; if ethics crosses with sociology, a group of basic terms about sociology will combine with translation conceptions. ... Therefore, from the angle of production and development of new translational concepts, translation research combines with increasingly development of modern linguistics and with existent and new cross-disciplines, these both sides were increasing point of translational new concepts and new terms in the past and in the days to come.

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