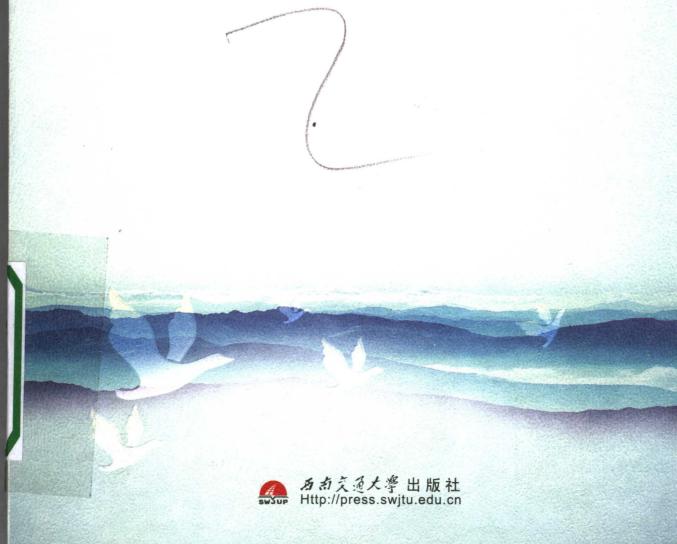# Intercultural Communication and Translation Techniques

跨文化交际与翻译策略

张治英　朱勤芹　著

· 跨文化研究丛书 ·

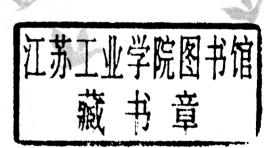# Intercultural Communication and Translation Techniques

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序

　　初冬的一天，张治英老师拿来一叠书稿要我作序，我欣然从允。张治英老师从事外语教学与研究已二十多年，一直对跨文化交际中英汉语言文化的对比及翻译研究有着浓厚的兴趣，经过多年的潜心钻研和实践，发表了有关学术论文多篇，为撰写《跨文化交际与翻译策略》这部专著奠定了基础。

　　翻译是一种实践性很强的跨文化交际活动，翻译策略则是从事这种活动的具体手段和方法。《跨文化交际与翻译策略》一书试图将比较语言学、跨文化交际学和翻译理论结合起来研究跨文化交际及翻译策略，并以跨文化交际理论为指导，借鉴社会学、社会语言学、人类学、语用学等学科关于交际和文化的研究成果，对不同文化中的交际规则进行跨文化对比。在此基础上，进一步探索跨文化交际学理论应用于翻译过程中的可行性，从而更深刻地揭示翻译的原理与技巧。

　　本书共分六章。全书说理透彻，脉络清晰。在翻译技巧的取舍上，作者未局限于传统的翻译技巧框架，不求面面俱到，对读者熟知的翻译策略和技巧略去或一带而过；对读者可能不太熟悉的技巧则多加笔墨，予以说明。譬如，书中第5.4节介绍的翻译策略"零译法"是一个较为新颖的翻译技巧，到目前为止，其他翻译理论书籍尚未详细阐释过，也可以说是一个翻译界未全面探讨过的问题，特别值得一读。

　　本书贯穿始终的指导思想，就是将翻译理论和实践与跨文化交际有机地结合，揭示语言、文化与交际的关系，以及文化对于翻译过程的影响，从而提高人们的跨文化交际能力和翻译水平。

　　总之，本书内容翔实，从理论到实践环环相扣，是一本侧重语言实际运用的好书，无疑对广大翻译工作者，以及从事外语教育和跨文化交际研究的教师和学者们都会有所裨益。

2007. 11. 26.

Preface

As is well known, translating is a skill which requires considerable practice. Potential translators must have a high level of aptitude for the creative use of language, or they are not likely to be outstanding in their profession. Some people imagine that the greatest problem in translating is to find the right words and constructions in the receptor or target language. On the contrary, the most difficult task for the translators is to understand thoroughly the designative and associative meanings of the text to be translated. This involves not only knowing the meanings of the words and the syntactic relation, but also being sensitive to all the nuances of the stylistic device.

This book is dedicated to undergraduates, postgraduates of English majors and all those who are interested in the study of intercultural communication and translation.

The whole book is divided into six chapters. Chapter one is an introduction to the theories of language. Chapter 2 will briefly introduce intercultural communication, which is connected with many factors, such as social culture, national psychology, manner of thoughts, and language acquisition, etc. With translation as an important method in the context of intercultural communication, we cannot avoid talking about intercultural communication and the relationships among language, culture, and translation. In Chapter 3, we will review some translation theories. In Chapter 4 kinds of translation techniques will be introduced in detail. In Chapter 5, a new translation technique—zero-translation is introduced. Chapter 6 is the prospect for the translation future.

This book makes no attempt to touch on all the problems which translators may face in intercultural communication. What it does is to help translators in the right direction by giving them insight as to how to finish the task through the application of practical translation techniques to complex problems which they may face in any and all types of translating during their intercultural communication.

Last, we'd like to express our gratitude to all those who have given us help and support during the writing of this book. Our special thanks will go to Professor Liu Mingdong , the dean of Foreign Languages Department of Hunan First Normal College , who has given us valuable guidance and constructive advice. Sincere appreciation will be given to the authors of the books and papers from which we have consulted a lot of references.

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Zhang Zhiying, Zhu Qinqin

July 8, 2007

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Contents

Chapter 1   Introduction

As the coming of the 21st century, the global economy and cultural diversity have been the general trends of our world. Digitalization and information technology have brought human society into an age of information expansion. This kind of fantastic spud creates human beings' globalization, especially in economy, finance and trade. The economic globalization has become a nonreversible trend, and none of nations in this world can or would like to hide themselves out of this trend behind this provincial wall. The globalization development trend in material world will cause revolution in cultural field. The result of economic globalization will undoubtedly bring the intercommunications among different cultures.

Technology has accelerated intercultural contact by spurring development in two areas of human endeavor: transportation systems and communication systems. Trips once taking days are now measured in hours. Supersonic transports can place a tourist anywhere in the world within hours. Vacationing tourists are not the only ones enjoying the increased mobility brought about by technical advances in transportation systems. Business executives and government officials can now attend a breakfast meeting in San Francisco and a dinner conference in Paris—on the same day. One result of these expanded travel opportunities is that people are encountering cultures that sometimes seem bizarre and even mysterious. Sources of differences now go far beyond eating utensils, traditional attire, and modes of travel. Other developments in transportation technology are on the horizon—developments that will further increase cultural contact. With increased ease of mobility, we are likely to encounter new cultures at a greater rate than before. New and advanced communication systems have also encouraged and facilitated cultural interaction during the past decade.

Kinds of problems in technology, trade, education, energy, economy, enterprise management etc. involve of all the countries in the world. When we communicate with people from other cultures, we are often confronted with languages and norms different from our own. Confronting these differences can be a source of insight into the rules and norms of our own culture, as well as being a source of frustration or gratification. Low efficient communication and misunderstanding among each other and other communication blocks may cause the cultural conflict, psychological

1

obstacles, and even more serious disasters. The differences in culture will bring great difficulties when people communicating with each other are from different cultural backgrounds, and make people bored and depressed. Therefore, intercultural communication should be the core of our study, and it has become more and more important.

Intercultural communication is not new. Larry A. Samovar points out that wandering nomads, religious missionaries, and conquering warriors have encountered people different from themselves since the beginning of time. Today's intercultural encounters differ from earlier meetings. They are more abundant and, because of the interconnectedness of the world, more significant. We can now board a plane and fly anywhere in the world in a matter of hours, and the reality of a global economy makes today's contacts far more commonplace than in any other period of the world's history (Samovar, 2003:2).

With this rapid development of world economy, people have increasingly enlarged their communications with others and the intercultural communications among countries are becoming more and more frequent. It is difficult to overestimate the importance of the role that communication plays in this ever more crowded and interconnected world. Communication can be classified into two kinds: oral and written. When we talk or chat with others, it is a kind of communication; when we write a letter to somebody, or leave a message, it is also a kind of communication. Translation, which includes interpretation and written translation, also belongs to the classification of communication. As a means of bridging people from different cultures, translation is an important part of intercultural communication. It should therefore come as no surprise that, in a world developing from mass communication to universal or global communication and becoming ever more complex in terms of technology and organization, translation is becoming increasingly important as a medium of international communication. With intercultural communication becoming more and more important, we have to pay more attention to translation at the same time.

In the Encyclopedia Britannica, translation is defined as "translation, the act or process of rendering what is expressed in one language or set of symbols by means of another language or set of symbols" (Micropaedia 10:93, Hornby, 2001:39).

As we all know, superficially, translation deals with different languages, that is, how to render what's expressed in one language (generally known as source language, shortened to SL for convenience) into another language (generally known as target language, shortened to TL for convenience). But is translating simply the act of transferring the meaning of a text from one language into another or does it depend on some theory of similarities and contrasts between languages? There are hundreds of definitions of translation, each possessing to certain degree

2

validity. In spite of the fact that most makers of definitions tend to say something to the effect that translation, in essence, is an interlingual transfer, Gu Zhengkun (2002: 31) thinks that translation means far more than this. It is not merely an interlingual behavior; rather, it is, as far as its essential nature is concerned, a matter-spirit communication closely related to many other disciplines.

Gu explains his opinion from the standpoint of philosophy and he thinks that translation actually serves as one of the bases of epistemology and modern communication theory. We all agree that translation is more or less an activity of information transfer. However, we are getting used to thinking of information as something that is only related to human languages. Gu Zhengkun suggests if we go beyond this vision of habitual thinking, we can easily find that the activity of information transference permeates every aspect of our life. In a sense, we are inclined to think that the principles of human communication in general sense are, to a considerable extent, the principles of translation. Everything we see of the physical world is always transferred into our brain as corresponding visual signs, and this transference is indeed a sort of translation as creative as the lingual rendering, for, the physical world we see is surely not exactly equivalent to the corresponding visual signs restored in our brains, but the transference does in one way or another vividly reflect the world we confront every day. So long as we live in this world we are in no way to escape from constantly translating the world; or in other words, we have to, by means of our particular way of translation, perceive, understand and make sure of this physical world. So in Gu Zhengkun's opinion, Man himself is a translation machine whose greater part of life constitutes none other than translation activities.

In this book, we will refer to different translation techniques, such as free translation, literal translation, transliteration, zero-translation, etc. Grasping and using those techniques correctly will benefit those who are devoted to the translation work definitely, including translators, teachers who study language translation and teaching, and students.

This book has six chapters. Chapter One is a brief introduction to the theories of language. Chapter Two will briefly introduce intercultural communication, which is connected with many factors, such as social culture, national psychology, manner of thoughts, and language acquisition, etc.. With translation as an important method in the context of intercultural communication, we cannot avoid talking about intercultural communication, and also the relationships among language, culture, and translation. In Chapter Three, we will review some translation theories. Chapter Four will introduce kinds of translation techniques in detail. In Chapter Five, a new translation technique—zero-translation is introduced. Chapter Six is the prospect for the translation future.

3

Chapter 2 Language, Culture, Translation and Intercultural Communication

In essence, translation can never be done successfully without full consideration of culture due to the intrinsic connection between language and culture. Therefore, when we discuss translation, we can not avoid discussing culture. Culture influences translation greatly. The communications among different cultures are the challenge of translation. Actually, the transfer of languages is not just the direct information transfer, but also the close relationship between information transfer and culture of language system. Many problems in translation are caused by culture differences and non-language differences. Thus, we can say translation is a cross-cultural act, and its purpose is to exchange ideas and cultures. Translation promotes understanding among different countries and nations. (Sun Yifeng, 2004:8)

Since translation concerns with the transference of two different cultures respectively belonging to two different languages, it is natural to consider the relationship between language and culture. Before we go on learning the relationships between translation and culture, language and culture, and the relationship among the three, now let's learn what culture is first.

2.1 Definitions of culture

"Culture" is one of the hottest terms people talk about, whereas its sense and meaning are also the least definite and clear. It is roughly calculated that there are about 250 definitions of culture.

Edward T. Hall points out in his *Beyond Culture* that "culture is communication and communication is culture". Thus, if we want to communicate effectively, we have to understand what culture is. Hall says "culture is everything and everywhere. And more important, at least for our purposes, culture governs and defines the conditions and circumstances under which various messages may or may not be sent, noticed, or interpreted." Culture is ubiquitous,

4

multidimensional, complex, and all-pervasive, and many definitions have been suggested for culture. Definitions of culture range from all-encompassing ones ("it is everything") to narrower ones ("it is opera, art, and ballet"). (Samovar, 2003:36)

The *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching & Applied Linguistics* (LDLTAL) defines culture as "the total set of beliefs, attitudes, customs, behavior, social habits, etc. of the members of a particular society" (1992:117). This definition emphasizes culture as a "total set" of things shared by members of a particular society.

The classic definition given by Edward Tylor in *The Origins of Culture* (1871:1) emphasizes the quality of culture's being "the whole" : Culture or civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.

In the New Encyclopedia Britannica, culture is "behavior peculiar to mankind together with material objects that are part of this behavior. Culture consists of language, ideas, beliefs, customs, codes, institutions, tools, techniques, works of arts, rituals, ceremonies, and so on".

E. A. Hoebel and E. L. Frost see culture as the "integrated system" of "learned" behavior patterns. They define culture as "integrated system of learned behavior patterns which are characteristics of the members of a society and which are not the result of biological inheritance" in *Culture and Social Anthropology* (1976: 6).

Larry A. Samovar gives the definition of culture: the deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, actions, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion, notions of time, roles, spatial relations, concepts of the universe, and artifacts acquired by a group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving. Culture can therefore include everything from rites of passage to concepts of the soul. (Samovar, 2003:36)

Schafer sees culture as not only the product of human mind but also a dynamic process: "Culture is an organic and dynamic whole which is concerned with the way people see and interpret the world, organize themselves, conduct their affairs, elevate and enrich life, and position themselves in the world". (Schafer, 1998:40)

The American linguist E. Sapir points out, in his *Language: an Introduction to the Study of Speeches* (1921:35), that "Culture can be explained as what the society does and thinks."

However, the definition of culture, which includes language factor, is the one by Peter Newmark, the English translation theorist. In his *A Textbook of translation*, Newmark puts forwards the definition: "I define culture as the way of life and his manifestation that is peculiar to a community that uses a peculiar language as its means of expression."

Generally speaking, we can say "Culture is a system of shared beliefs, values, customs,

behaviors, and artifacts that the members of a society use to cope with their world and with one another, and that are transmitted from generation to generation through learning." This more comprehensive definition is given by D. G. Bates & F. Plog in *Cultural Anthropology* (1990:28), including not only patterns of behavior but also patterns of thought (shared meanings that the members of a society attach to various phenomena, natural and intellectual, including religion and ideologies), artifacts (tools, pottery, houses, machines, works of art) and the culturally transmitted skills and techniques used to make the artifacts.

2.2 Classifications of culture

According to the subjective sense of the cultural receptor, cultural can be classified into two types: one is Culture with a big C, including art, literature, music, architecture, philosophy and technique achievements, reflecting aspects of human civilization; the other is culture with a small c, including customs, life styles, behavior rules, social customs, the way of the world, social organizations and interrelationships among each other. (Stern, 1992:208)

Chinese scholars generally treat culture as having certain hierarchical stratums. For instance, Chen Hongwei holds that culture consists of three categories in scope, "However complex it (culture) is, it can be roughly classified into three categories in scope: material culture which refers to all the products of manufacture; institutional culture which refers to social system, religious system, ritual system, educational system and kinship system etc.; and mental culture which refers to people's mentalities and behaviors, their beliefs, perceptions, concept of value, thought patterns etc." (Guo Jianzhong, 2000:257)

Similarly, the Chinese cultural linguist Xing Fuyi also distinguishes three stratums of culture, namely, the material stratum, the institutional stratum and the psychological stratum. The material stratum of culture concerns the patterns and products of human's remaking the nature, and it consists of materials created by mankind, such as production and transportation tools, weapons, daily utilities, clothing, articles for living and other human activities. The institutional stratum of culture concerns the patterns and products of human's remaking the society, and it consists of institutions and theories of a society, such as family institutions, social regulations, and the theories concerning labor management, artistic production, education, morals, customs, religion, etiquettes, law, politics, police, army, etc. The psychological stratum of culture concerns the patterns and products of human's remaking their subjective world, and it includes thinking patterns, aesthetics, religious beliefs, values, etc. According to Xing Fuyi, the material stratum reflects the relationship between human and nature, the institutional stratum the relationship among humans, and the mental stratum the relationship between human and themselves.

Liu Miqing (1999:107), a Chinese translator, distinguishes four stratums of culture, namely, the material stratum, the institutional stratum, the mental stratum, and the behavioral and customary stratum. The material stratum in Liu Miqing's classification concerns the culture represented by material things which includes production and living tools and all the material culture concerning people's clothing, eating, housing and behaviors, including the part of nature which is remade or made use of by the mankind. The institutional stratum in Liu's classification consists of three pans, namely, conventions, systems and institutions. The mental stratum includes value systems and cognitive activities, such as sensation, cognition, emotions, thinking-patterns, and aesthetic systems. The behavioral and customary stratum includes patterns of daily social communicative behaviors, material producing behaviors and political and military behaviors.

Generally speaking, culture is an extremely complex concept. No matter how complex it is, it can be roughly classified into three categories in scope: (1) Substantial culture, which refers to all things people have done. They are usually real objects like houses, vehicles, tools, foods, clothes and so on. (2) Spiritual culture, which refers to what people think, including the patterns of thought, values, worldview, esthetic sense etc. It also includes the products of people's thinking, such as philosophy, art, literature, history; paintings, sculptures and so on. (3) Custom and System culture, which means the ways of life and social organizations, such as social system, religious system, ritual system, educational system and kinship system, etc.

"Culture" in this book means the culture that includes these tree aspects.

2.3   Language and culture

From the definitions of culture, we can see that language is part of culture and language is also a means of expressing culture.

The transference of culture can resort to various codes, for example, Braille, Morse code, semaphore signaling, gestures and even clothes, colors and architecture convey information about culture. Nevertheless, language is of course the most important code of all for the transference of culture which we have had a general idea from Newmark's definition of culture. So, language is closely related with culture. Just like Susan Bassnett says, language, then, is the heart within the body of culture, and it is the interaction between the two that results in the continuation of life-energy in the same way that the surgeon, operating in the heart, can't neglect the body that surrounds it, so the translator treats the text in isolation from the culture at his pencil. (Bassnett, 1991: 22)

No language can exist unless it is steeped in the context of culture; and no culture can exist which does not have at its center, the structure of natural language. Language and culture are

closely related with each other in three ways.

2.3.1 Language is part of culture

The relation of language to culture is that of part to whole. Culture is a wider system that completely includes language as a subsystem. Language can't exist and will lose its meaning and significance without culture as culture provides soil for it to grow and develop. Simultaneously, language does not exist in a vacuum and it is embedded in the culture of a people and reflects the totality of beliefs and sentiments of the speech community. Any kind of language exists in certain cultural background and is conditioned by that culture. Language is also indispensable to the functioning of a culture and the transmitting of a culture to succeeding generations. Language does more than representing elements of a culture and it also models culture by expressing, embodying and symbolizing cultural reality. Between language and culture there is an interactive influence. "A language is a part of a culture and a culture is a part of language, the two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture." (Douglas, 2001:34) Thus the relation between language and culture is so close that their interdependency on each other seems almost inseparable. As is depicted in *Language and Culture* by Claire Kramsch, "Language expresses cultural reality and language embodies cultural reality...language symbolizes cultural reality." (Kramsch, 2000:3) The American translation theorist Eugene A. Nida, when stating the significance of language to culture, put more forcefully, nothing is of greater strategic importance than the language through which its beliefs are expressed and transmitted and which most interaction of its members takes place. (Nida, 2003:78)

Language is only part of culture. Language is not material culture, and language is only used to organize production and explain the usage of working tools; in the case of institutional culture, language is used sometimes; however, mental culture must be expressed and recorded through language. Therefore, language is not all of culture, but part of it as an important symbol. Language represents the culture because the words refer to the culture, as the beliefs and practices of a society, but the representation is never complete or perfect. Changes in language inevitably tend to lag behind changes in culture, but there are also aspects of culture that are so taken for granted that people simply do not feel the need for terminology to talk about what is completely obvious. (ibid: 155)

2.3.2 Language is the carrier of culture

Language is the carrier of culture and the mirror of culture. Culture motivates the development of language. When a culture experiences radical change, the vocabulary also