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REGISTER Analysis in Translation Description

A Translation-oriented Model for REGISTER Analysis of
English-Chinese Fictional Parallel Texts

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English-Chinese Emotional Parallel Texts

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藏书章
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Preface I

Chai Xiujuan, the present author has many special particularities among my students in her experience, school life and mental attitude, which can roughly trace out her growing track and the birth of this book.

In January 1975, Xiujuan was born in a small village in Ningyang County, Tai'an City, Shandong Province of China, where she finished her six-year elementary school life. During this period, she had kept on her diligence and perseverance although she had to transfer to three different schools with family moving. And finally she entered No. 1 Middle School of Ningyang County. The fact that a county girl could learn well and have a bright future despite of many difficulties is quite similar to the experience of one of my senior students, Pan Zhangxian, who had been a cowherd girl and now a professor in Zhejiang Normal University.

From 1993 to 1997, Xiujuan entered Liaocheng Teachers' College (now Liaocheng University) and majored in English Education with the painstaking guidance of Prof. Zhang Delu, Dean of English Department of the time. Then, after two years' working, she entered Ocean University of Qingdao (now Ocean University of



China), attended Prof. Yang Zijian and Prof. Zhang Delu's courses, and completed Master's thesis under the supervision of Prof. Zhang. All of these efforts have laid a solid academic foundation for her, especially in Systemic-functional linguistics, Contrastive linguistics and Translation studies.

In 2002, Xiujuan was admitted to Beijing Normal University and became a doctoral candidate. At that time, with recommendation of Prof. Wang Qiang, the Dean of the Department of Foreign Languages of the time, I accepted the ministry of personnel and the graduate school of the same University's invitation to be a part-time doctoral supervisor, and so I have built teacher-student relationship with Xiujuan from then on. As a general recruited student, she spent much more time on studying than mommy doctoral candidates or those on the job. More importantly, she actually made full use of the time, including weekends and vacations. If we can use quality and quantity to analyze the cultivation of one person, she devoted better and more time to her study.

Now, xiujuan's doctoral dissertation, based on the register theory in Systemic functional linguistics, is mainly concerned with the contrastive description of English-Chinese fictional translational parallel texts. The research topic shows that she has the courage to break a new research path rarely trodden by others on the one hand, and on the other hand it is an inevitable result from all her scholarly research mentioned above. In addition, Xiujuan's progression is manifested in that she has managed to establish a relatively comprehensive REGISTER analysis model for translation description. In order to achieve the goal, she has explored the relevance and applicability of

register analysis and translation description, distinguished ‘register’ from ‘genre’, ‘text types’, and ‘style’, compared the discrepant uses of ‘register’ by many researchers, and found out priorities of register analysis and genre analysis in theory and practice. Accordingly, she has argued that REGISTER analysis of parallel texts helps to predict and expound schematic knowledge of relevant participants.

At last, I have to talk about Xiujuan’s unexpected choice when she received the doctoral degree. As a general recruited student, she could absolutely find a position in some university in Beijing. But she went back to Liaocheng University for deep feelings towards her husband, parents and Alma Mater. She is really a pride of Liaocheng University. If we were able to cultivate more students like Xiujuan, who performs the unordinary life with the ordinary mental attitude, the higher education of China will certainly have faster development.

Prof. Hu Zhuanglin

Lan Qi Ying Home, Peking University

July 14th, 2006

Preface II

I am very glad to see Dr. Chai Xiujuan's work *REGISTER Analysis in Translation Description* sent to the press, not only because another new work about the application of Systemic Functional Linguistics (hereafter SFL) to translation theoretical studies, which indicates that SFL can be useful both for revealing translation practices and for establishing translation theories, but also because it suggests that Dr. Chai has come into the academic circle of China after six years' unremitting efforts. Congratulations!

In addition, I am glad to see this new work because Chai Xiujuan is one of my first supervised postgraduate students. In the beginning, although I hoped that my students could have a bright future and academic achievements, yet I was a little doubtful of my ability to supervise a postgraduate student. Today, my hope is realized to a certain extent, and of course I feel gratified Chai Xiujuan studied very hard and got praised by her classmates during the postgraduate research period. After graduation she was admitted to Beijing Normal University and became a doctoral candidate, under the supervision of Prof. Hu Zhuanglin, a senior life-long professor in Peking University. Then she completed all the required courses on time and



received a doctoral degree.

Dr. Chai had given her attention to the relationship between the register theory in SFL and translation during the postgraduate research period, and chose the research topic in this respect in her doctoral dissertation. Then, why was she so absorbed in the relationship between the register theory and translation? I think that she has recognized the important role of the register theory in translation theories and practices, besides her own interest in this topic.

Translation is always concerned with equivalence at some level and in some aspect. If we talk about texts are equivalent to each other on 'faithfulness' (it seems to be the postulate of so-called 'translational version'), we will surely concern about equivalence at all the semantic aspects between texts. And the 'skopos' theory, which emphasizes that the major goal of good translation is to pursue equivalence on 'purpose', requires a translator to seek the communicative functional equivalence between the source text and the target text. In addition, some researchers stress the stylistic equivalence in translation; some stress the readers' receptive equivalence; and some stress equivalence on the cultural appeal, and so on. And the register theory can play an important role in realizing no matter what kinds of equivalence; whether on the meaning, or on the purpose, or on the style, because it is actually a theory, which relates text to context. In the traditional translation studies, most of the equivalence studies are made at sentence level, or on the whole meaning or on the communicative purpose of texts sporadically and separately; there lacks a feasible theoretical framework as an analytical tool to connect different types of equivalence studies. In fact, the

register theory in SFL provides the very theoretical framework. From the systemic perspective, the theory provides us with the meaning resources, on which the production of text is based. From the perspective of Field of discourse, the social action provides us with the scope and types of ideational meaning resources; from the perspective of Tenor of discourse, the role structure provide us with the scope and types of interpersonal meaning resources; from the perspective of Mode of discourse, the symbolic organization provides us with textual meaning resources. From the perspective of translation activity, it concerns the different influences of two systems of linguistic-cultures on translation. In the choice of ideational meaning, the social action or events may not change, but members in different cultural communities may have different interpretations, different descriptive angles, and emphases on different aspects. And so, the normal and conventional way of description in one language may be deviant, exceptional, and even odd in another language. How to tackle this problem rests with translators' decision. In the choice of interpersonal meaning, interpersonal relationships, communicative rules and principles, forms of politeness and social classes in different cultures are different, and so translation will be concerned with ways, methods and techniques to transform the foreign interpersonal relationships into the native ones. In the choice of textual meaning, the different development degrees of media in different nations and cultures lead to different modes of discourse. And so translation will involve ways, methods and techniques to transform the typical communicative modes in different communities and cultures.

In the translation of an actual text, all the differences at the



aspects of socio-culture, communicative principles, norms and ways mentioned above should be handled appropriately in the translating process. In this case, the register theory can clarify the relevant factors in translation, and make the translator more consciously apply the theory to translation practices and avoid some mistakes. Therefore, at the present day when text, as a basic translation unit, is generally accepted and used to control and adjust the translation of sentences, paragraphs and bigger discoursal fragments, the register theory is even more indispensable in translation studies and practices.

Until now, the register theory is not widely applied to translation studies, furthermore few researchers has tried to apply the register theory to translation theories and practices comprehensively, like Dr. Chal. The research topic in the present dissertation has both theoretical implications and practical applications.

In Chapter 1 and 2 of her dissertation, Dr. Chai mainly defines the relevant concepts, provides a general review and appraisal of the register theory, and clears up the relationships between different approaches to register analysis. In Chapter 3, she first of all explores the relevance of register analysis to translation and investigates how the register theory works in translation studies and practices. Then she particularly studies the two key concepts: 'register' and 'genre', and puts forward the new idea that the two concepts actually have the equivalent meaning in a general sense, and they are only distinguished from each other in two different perspectives (instantial vs. systemic). After that, she proposes the framework of REGISTER analysis (different from the original register analysis), including the two integral parts: genre analysis from systemic perspective in terms of

the contextual constructs of Action-Relation-Contact, and register analysis from instantial perspective in terms of the contextual constructs of Field-Tenor-Mode. Finally, she summarizes the main content of REGISTER analysis in translation description based on the nature and characteristics of translation phenomenon. And Chapter 4 and 5 is mainly concerned with the application of the framework of REGISTER analysis to the description of fictional parallel texts. After the relevant theoretical clarification and exploration, she has done some illustrations so as to closely connect the theoretical studies and the practical considerations.

In conclusion, her dissertation has established a relatively comprehensive framework of REGISTER analysis for translation description, and can provide translation theories and practices with the inspiration. However, the author, as a novice to the academic field, lacks experiences of translation practices and enough, verification of the proposed theory to a certain extent. In addition, the research topic involves many relevant factors. Therefore, the present work may have some limitations, which are to be solved in her subsequent studies.

Prof. Zhang Delu

Fu Shan Yuan, Ocean University of China

July 14th, 2006

前 言

语域分析理论，作为一种用于解释语篇和语境之间关系的理论，已经在语篇分析、社会语言学、语言教学和翻译研究中得到了比较有效的应用。但是，语域分析在翻译描述中的应用，不论是理论相关性的问题，还是具体应用中的问题，则很少有人专门论及。这种缺憾，一方面与语域分析、翻译描述本身所具有的复杂性紧密相关，另一方面则是与现有语域分析理论和实践的局限性分不开的。基于上述原因，本书主要致力于两个基本研究目的：（1）从理论上论证语域分析在翻译描述中的可应用性，并据此发展语域理论以适应翻译描述的需要；（2）建立一个可以用于描述英汉虚构类翻译平行语篇的“语域”分析^①模式。

为了达成上述研究目的，本书第一章首先对“平行语篇”、“翻译描述”、“虚构类平行语篇的语境”和“语域分析（包括理论和实践）”进行了简要的阐释和界定，以便进行接下来的研究。然后，文献综述部分（第二章）概括和梳理了与论题紧密相关的前人研究成果，其中主要包括系统功能语言学学派的多

^① 附加有双引号的“语域”分析，特指本书提出的“语域”分析模式。英文中使用大写字母（REGISTER）用来表示与以前语域分析的区别。



种语域理论，多维度语域分析的途径，文学语篇中的语域分析，及各种语域分析理论或途径在翻译研究中的应用，并分别作简要评述。

在此基础上，第三章开始切入论题，首先从理论上的普遍性出发，论证语域分析与翻译描述的理论相关性；然后，基于这种相关性和翻译描述的具体内容及要求，对以前语域分析的相关理论进行综合评价，指出“语域”概念界定标准的不统一、语境和语言功能理论阐释上的过度概括化、语域分析中实例化过程和系统化过程的模糊处理以及对相关参与者认知过程的忽略，是制约语域分析理论和实践发展的重要因素，也是我们把语域分析应用于翻译描述中所不得不面对的问题。为了解决这些问题，接下来，通过对“语域”概念和“语类”、“语篇类型”、“文体（风格）”概念的比较，以及对 Halliday 语域分析和 Martin 语类分析理论互补性的探讨，本书认为，作为一个概括性的概念，“语域”和“语类”涵盖相同，都是用来指语言系统中的社会语义系统，同时也是一种参与者的认知图式结构；但是在具体使用中，这两个概念还是有所区别的，这种区别可以解释为“两种视角”——系统视角和实例视角。所以本书提出的“语域”分析（区别于原先的语域分析）框架，其中包括系统视角下的语类分析和实例视角中的语域分析：前者从系统出发，涉及具体语篇的互文关系，其语境因素包括行为（Action）、关系（Relation）、符媒（Contact）；后者则从实例出发，涉及具体语篇的语境化过程，其语境因素包括语场（Field）、语旨（Tenor）、语式（Mode）。参与者对这两个视角下的语境因素的知觉，即参与者的相关图式知识，在语篇生成和解释中起着至关重要的作用。本章最后，根据翻译现象的本质和特征，概述了翻译描述中“语域”分析的基本内容。

根据“语域”分析的基本框架，第四章主要涉及这一框架在虚构类平行语篇描述中的应用。因为以前的语域分析较少涉及虚构类语篇，所以本章首先从虚构类语篇的语境特征描述开始，适当吸取关于这类语篇的文学研究成果，将这类语篇的语境分为两个层次：叙述语境和外在语境，并把它们融入基本的“语域”分析框架，阐释了虚构类语篇的“语境化”过程及其“互文关系”的识别过程。接着，从平行语篇的语境特征描述开始，探讨了平行语篇与翻译行为之间的关系，翻译“对等”和“转换”概念在“语域”分析框架中的定位和解释，由此建立了平行语篇描述的综合“语域”分析框架及其基本分析步骤。在具体理论的阐释过程中，还选取了一组平行语篇，用来简要例示“语域”分析框架是如何用来描述虚构类平行语篇的。

因为本论题涉及的是应用型基础理论的阐释，所以第五章主要探讨了“语域”分析基本框架在平行语篇描述中的应用性问题，并提出一些初步的建议。本章选取 *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland & Through the Looking Glass* 和各种汉语译本作为例示，首先说明了大语境研究和功能语篇分析对平行语篇“语域”分析的辅助作用，然后探讨了语类分析和语域分析在理论上和在实践中的优先地位，最后，简要说明了平行语篇的“语域”描述有助于预测和阐释相关参与者（主要是译者）的图式知识。

在结论部分（第六章），首先简要回顾了本书的主要研究成果，然后对“语域”分析框架应用于平行语篇描述的后续性研究作了思考，提出“语域”分析框架有待于更多平行语篇语料的验证，和相关理论的进一步深入阐释和介入。

由于本书试图建立一个较为完整的翻译描述中的“语域”分析框架，涉及的相关因素比较多，所以对一些具体问题的研究显得不够深入。另外，由于本书用了较大的篇幅综述、归纳



和评价前人的研究，而且为了增加分析框架的可靠性，进行了较充分的理论阐释，所以在实例分析上有些单薄，不太充实。以上问题希望在今后的研究中得以解决。

请广大专家、学者批评指正！

柴秀娟

2006年2月于聊城大学西苑

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

The register theory, which is used to explain the relationship between text and context, has been applied effectively in discourse analysis, socio-linguistics, language teaching and translation studies. However, the application of register analysis in translation description, including theoretical exploration and specific practices, has been rarely discussed. The gap is interrelated to the complexity of register analysis and translation description on the one hand, and on the other hand it is connected with limitations of the previous register theories and practices. Based on the relevance of the previous register analysis to translation studies, this book is intended to go further and develop a more valid framework of REGISTER analysis (to be used in translation description, especially the description of fictional parallel texts. In order to achieve this major goal, in Introduction we have clarified the two basic preliminary aims first of all, as follows:

(1) Validation of the relevance of register studies to translation description, and development of the previous register analysis in relation to translation description;

(2) Establishing a translation-oriented model of REGISTER analysis for an effective description of fictional parallel texts.



Since the research topic involves many concepts with certain theoretical background, in Introduction I have also provided brief explanations to such concepts as ‘parallel texts’, ‘translation description’, ‘context of fictional parallel texts’ and ‘register analysis’, in order to clear up the field before entering into the subsequent studies.

Chapter 2 mainly recapitulates the two major approaches to the previous register analysis (i. e. SFL register studies and MD approach), the general register studies of literature and previous applications of register analysis to translation studies. Among others, the Systemic register theories are provided in an elaborate way, because it is from this linguistic school that we have acquired most theoretical interpretations on the concept of ‘register’.

Chapter 3 starts with the justification of the relevance of the previous register analysis to translation description from a general theoretical perspective. Then, in relation to translation description, a critical appraisal of the previous register analysis is made to foreground some problems to be solved in the present study. Next, workable solutions to the problems, i. e. defining ‘register’, distinguishing ‘register’ from ‘genre’, ‘text types’, and ‘style’, incorporating ‘schema’ into SFL register theoretical construct, are explored and explicated. And accordingly, the capitalized ‘REGISTER/GENRE’ is introduced to denote their common general conceptual sense, that is, the semantic system that is realization of a specific socio-cultural contextual configuration; whereas the two terms in small letters are used to indicate their distinct perspectives in their specific theoretical orientation. To specify, genre analysis is mainly done from the